

Arab, Israeli teenagers to meet in Switzerland to negotiate peace

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Arab and Israeli teenagers will convene in Switzerland next month to try and negotiate a peace agreement, organizers of the youth summit announced Thursday.

"They will attempt to draft a declaration of principles," said John Wallach, director of the "Seeds for Peace" programme that is sponsoring the summit in Villars, Switzerland.

"In doing so they will try to

set an example for adults." The 72 teens from Israel, Egypt, the United States, the Palestinian National Authority and Jordan will divide into four negotiating committees, each group assigned to one of the major issues left for the final status talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

The committees will tackle the status of Palestinian refugees, the future of Jerusalem, the borders of a Palestinian state and Jewish settlements.

Mr. Wallach said it wasn't certain whether the 14, 15, and 16-year-olds would arrive at an agreement but said that the effort would be worthwhile as a lesson in understanding each other better.

Her Majesty Queen Noor, former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat, Egyptian political adviser Osama Al Baz, President Flavio Cotti of Switzerland and Israeli parliament mem-

ber Meir Shetreet are all planning to attend the summit.

In addition, U.S. First Lady Hillary Clinton will appear before the summit via satellite and answer questions.

The privately-funded programme was founded in 1993 after the signing of the Israel-PLO accord and has had more than 600 youth participants at summer camp sessions in Maine.

The summit is being sponsored by the Swiss health care company Novartis.

Israeli jets, artillery hit south Lebanon; civilian killed

SIDON (AP) — Israeli warplanes and artillery attacked suspected guerrilla positions in southern Lebanon Thursday, killing a farmer a day after Israel's government endorsed a U.N. resolution calling for its withdrawal and an end to military operations.

Two Israeli jets fired four air-to-surface missiles on hills near the village of Loueizeh in Iqim Al Tuffah, a Hizbollah stronghold that faces the Israeli-occupied border enclave in the south.

Lebanese security officials said. Shortly afterward, a 33-year-old farmer was killed in shelling from the Israeli-held area as he drove his tractor on a road outside the largely deserted village, the officials said.

The area is about 15 kilometers southeast of the port city of Sidon, the provincial capital of southern Lebanon.

Late Thursday night, guerrillas and Israeli forces traded mortar and rocket fire, the

security officials said. Several guerrilla mortar shells exploded near an Israeli military post at Houla, 1.5 kilometers from the Israeli border and about 50 kilometers southeast of Sidon.

There were no reports of damage or injuries.

Earlier Thursday the Lebanese government lodged a complaint about Israel's attacks with a five-nation monitoring committee that monitors the fighting in southern Lebanon.

Khatami invited to visit Saudi Arabia — ambassador

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian President Mohammad Khatami has been invited to visit Saudi Arabia as relations rapidly improve between the two Muslim countries, Iran's ambassador in Riyadh was quoted as saying Friday.

Mohammad-Reza Nuri-Shahrudi said Mr. Khatami had been invited by King Fahd and Prince Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz, the official Iranian news agency IRNA reported.

Speaking to reporters in Mecca on Thursday, he said Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal would visit Iran after the end of Muslim pilgrimage, Hajj, in Saudi Arabia next week.

"Relations between Tehran and Riyadh are developing in all aspects and King Fahd's invitation to Khatami is a good example," Mr. Shahrudi said.

He said several Iranian delegations were presently in Saudi Arabia to negotiate mutual cooperation.

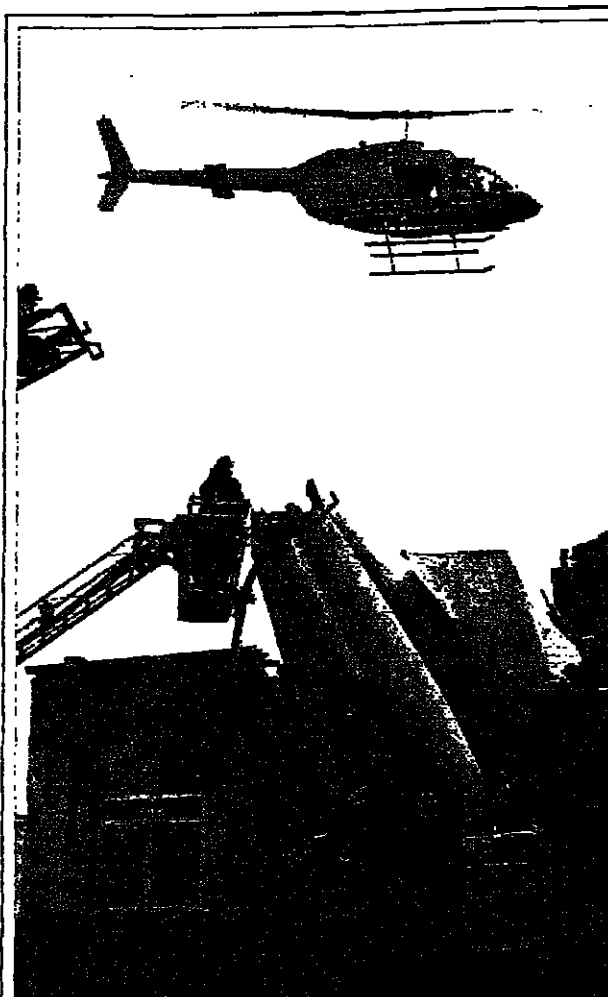
Several Iranian state firms are taking part in an oil fair in Doha, and Iran will in the near future hold its own fair in the same Saudi city, the ambassador said.

He added that the two countries will set up a direct air route to facilitate commercial exchanges.

The diplomat also praised Saudi authorities for their "good" accommodation of Iranian pilgrims for this year's Hajj.

There has been nearly two decades of tense relations since Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution, as Iranian radicals were angry over Saudi Arabia's pro-American policies and its support for Iraq during the 1980-1988 war against Iran.

Former President Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani visited Saudi Arabia in late February and on his return voiced regret about the state of relations.



HELICOPTER CRASHES IN ISTANBUL: A helicopter flies over the wreckage of a police helicopter Friday as firemen try to rescue policemen trapped in the wreckage. The police helicopter, which recently carried Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz, crashed into a deserted building in a busy Istanbul district near the Grand Bazaar, and a local official said up to three people were killed (Reuters photo)

South Sudan children severely malnourished — World Vision

NAIROBI (AFP) — A humanitarian agency said Friday it had discovered widespread and severe malnutrition among children and adults in the Gogrial county of southern Sudan's Bahr Al Ghazal state.

World Vision said its survey team had visited Panicker district, near the Juv River, on Thursday and discovered that more than 200 children examined showed signs of severe malnutrition.

"The local sub-chief in one village told the team that 40 children had died from hunger-related causes over that last month," a New Vision press statement said.

The agency said it requested the U.N. World Food Programme to arrange for food aid to the affected areas and that it was planning to open feeding centres for the malnourished children.

Relief agencies flew into

formerly barred areas of southern Bahr Al Ghazal on Thursday after the lifting of a flight ban by the Khartoum government. Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) said.

OLS, which groups U.N. and other aid agencies, said in a statement that 350,000 people in Bahr Al Ghazal were in urgent need of humanitarian assistance.

The Sudanese government suspended all flights into Bahr Al Ghazal on Feb. 4 during fighting for the town of Wau between government troops and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army.

The suspension was partially

NEWS IN BRIEF

Got a problem? Call Egypt's prime minister

CAIRO (AFP) — For hundreds of Egyptians, when domestic, school or work problems rear their ugly heads, the answer seems obvious, call in the prime minister. The office of Prime Minister Kamal Ganzuri daily receives hundreds of calls from distraught Egyptian citizens, government daily Al Akhbar reported Friday. Some of the petitioners are mere children. One boy recently asked for Mr. Ganzuri to use his powers to solve "a serious marital dispute" between his mother, who wanted a portable telephone, and his father, who refused. An impatient fiancé contacted Mr. Ganzuri's office to ask the premier to intervene to speed up the release of his final examination results. The reason: His intended refused to marry him until she confirmed that he had passed. The demands know no age limit. One retiree recently asked the prime minister to try to soften his children's resistance to his remarrying after the death of their mother, the newspaper said.

Technion develops mine clearing 'tool box'

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel's Institute of Technology has developed a unique mine removal system that boasts a success rate of almost 100 per cent, the Technion said Thursday. The Technion's "tool box" is a unique combination of components, combines and tractors installed on various attachments chosen to accommodate surrounding terrain and operated by remote control. The system, that has a 99.6 per cent success rate, can clear anti-personnel mines or anti-tank mines found on the surface or buried up to 45 cm, a statement from the Technion said. "Mine clearing as a physical labour is dangerous and inefficient and will never enable removal of the millions of mines in the world," said Gedalyahu Manor, who helped develop the system. "This tool box we developed contributes to the international effort growing to deal with this difficult problem," he added. There are an estimated 60 million to 100 million mines in the ground worldwide.

Iranian pilgrim crash toll rises to 28

SANLIURFA (AP) — An Iranian pilgrim on Friday died of severe burns, raising the number of fatalities from a bus crash a day earlier to 28. Twenty-five Iranians and two Turks died Thursday when a bus carrying Iranian pilgrims collided with a fuel truck and burst into flames near this southeastern city. Eight Iranians were injured. Turkish authorities said gas cooking devices the pilgrims were carrying with them exploded during the crash, setting both the bus and the truck on fire. The Iranians were returning from a pilgrimage to a shrine in Syria, reports said. Earlier, Turkish authorities had stated that the passengers were on their way back from a pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

Former Israeli premier Peres visits China

BEIJING (AFP) — Former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres arrived in Beijing Friday for a five-day visit. Xinhua reported. Mr. Peres, honorary president of the Council for the Promotion of Israel-China Relations, was welcomed by Vice Premier Qian Qichen, and is to visit a mosque before leaving next Wednesday. Mr. Peres' successor as prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, is to visit China from May 26 to 28.

Cypriot MP arrested in scuffle at British base

NICOSIA (AFP) — An outspoken Cypriot parliamentarian who opposes the British bases on the Mediterranean island was arrested after a scuffle with British military police on one of the bases. Marinos Matsakis, an active member of the anti-British base lobby here, clashed with the police after leaping a barricade at the entry to Dhekelia base in southwest Cyprus to try to attend the trial of a Cypriot farmer. "He is in custody following a scuffle with police officers at the SBA [Sovereign Base Area] court at Dhekelia earlier this morning," said base spokesman Mervyn Wynne-Jones. Mr. Matsakis had demanded entry to attend the trial of a farmer who was arrested by British base police on Thursday for blocking soldiers trying to clear trees at a firing range.

Report on cost of Iraqi oil sector repairs due in May — U.N.

BAGHDAD (AFP) — A report on the cost of repairing Iraq's oil infrastructure so it can boost output under the oil-for-food programme will be submitted to the U.N. Sanctions Committee in early May, a U.N. spokesman said Thursday.

U.N. humanitarian affairs spokesman Eric Falt said "the experts who left Iraq 10 days ago will be submitting their reports in New York during the week starting April 30."

"We have no knowledge of what the recommendations are going to be," he added.

A team of experts from Dutch company Saybolt spent two weeks in Iraq evaluating the infrastructure.

The U.N. Security Council

is expected to use the Saybolt report to decide whether to allow Iraq to import the

required spare parts for the repairs. Iraq estimates the cost of the spare parts needed to repair its oil facilities at \$300 million and says that the U.N.-appointed experts underestimated the amount.

The U.N.-Iraqi oil-for-food accord allowed Iraq to export limited amounts of oil to raise money to "import food" and medicine, pay war reparations and fund U.N. activities here.

In February, the U.N. Security Council decided to increase the amount of crude that Iraq can sell every six months from \$2 billion to \$5.2 billion.

Baghdad has said it does not have the capacity to produce more than \$4 billion worth of oil because it lacks the parts to repair its oil facilities.

Mr. Falt also said that spare

parts for six M12 Iraqi civilian helicopters will arrive during the first week of April.

The \$3.5 million in parts, authorised by the U.N. Sanctions Committee, "have reached Amman and are expected to cross the border at Tzeil during the first week of April," he said.

Iraq said it had nine M12 helicopters but one of them crashed in the north last week, killing the pilot.

Mr. Falt said another helicopter crashed in August, killing a farmer. Iraq has been under U.N. sanctions since its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, with their lifting conditional on arms inspectors confirming Baghdad has eliminated its weapons of mass destruction.

The oil-for-food programme was the first partial alleviation of the embargo.

Cypriot faces charges of spreading AIDS

NICOSIA (AFP) — A Cypriot woman was remanded in custody by a court here on Friday accused of having sex with four men in the past month without telling them she carried the deadly AIDS virus.

The 27-year-old, described by police as a London Cypriot, is due to be charged under a decades-old law to combat the spread of infectious diseases and will go on trial in a Nicosia court next Thursday.

Chrysavgi Zarzour, who lives in Nicosia but spent much of her life in London, was arrested a week ago after a complaint from a man who said she had sex with him without informing him she was HIV-positive.

During police questioning, the woman admitted having sex with another three men, and all four are being tested for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, police said.

Zarzour would become the

second person in Cyprus to be charged with knowingly passing on the Human Immune-deficiency Virus under a 50-year-old law introduced by the island's British colonial authorities to combat the spread of cholera and typhoid.

In July, Cypriot fisherman Pavlos Georgiou was convicted of knowingly infecting his British lover with HIV, but was released in December after serving just five months of a 15-month prison sentence.

Libyan industry lost \$5 billion due to embargo — report

TRIPOLI (AFP) — Libyan industry has lost more than \$5 billion as a result of an embargo imposed by the United Nations since 1992 because of Libya's alleged support for terrorism, an official report said.

According to the Libyan foreign ministry document, a copy of which was obtained

by AFP on Thursday, assembly lines are at a standstill in dozens of factories because of irregular supplies of raw materials. This has led to shortages of locally-made products.

The document said production costs had also gone up sharply due to an increase in the number of intermediaries

in the importation of raw materials.

Factories had been forced to close for long periods because of the difficulties encountered in obtaining guarantees from foreign banks and also because of the freeze of Libyan assets abroad ordered by the U.N. Security Council.

As a result, Libyan companies had been forced to turn to third parties to finance their imports, leading to an increase of more than 15 per cent in the prices of imported goods, the document said.

In February, a similar document said Libya's transport sector had lost \$378 million because of the embargo.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

16:10 Cartoon — The Real Adventures of Jonny Quest
16:30 French Programmes
18:00 Square One TV
18:30 Drama — Neighbours
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 French Programme
19:30 L'oeil de Colomb
19:30 News headlines
19:35 Quiz Show — You Bet Your Life
20:00 Cinema, Cinema
20:30 Prison
21:10 Drama — Sirens
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature film: "Across the Tracks"
23:59 Comedy — "Are You Being Served?"
00:30 End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:58 Fajr
06:17 Sunrise/Duha
12:39 Dhur
16:12 Asr
19:01 Maghreb
20:19 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
4632785

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Skies will be partly cloudy during the day becoming relatively cool at night with a chance of scattered showers in the northern parts of the Kingdom, and winds northwesterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 08/15
Aqaba 14/24
Deserts 04/14
Jordan Valley 13/23

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 15 Aqaba 25 Humidity readings: Amman 50 per cent, Aqaba 36 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Khalil Al Tushaq 757253
Dr. Bahjat Bader 832642
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim 830432

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Skies will be partly cloudy during the day becoming relatively cool at night with a chance of scattered showers in the northern parts of the Kingdom, and winds northwesterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 08/15
Aqaba 14/24
Deserts 04/14
Jordan Valley 13/23

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 15 Aqaba 25 Humidity readings: Amman 50 per cent, Aqaba 36 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Khalil Al Tushaq 757253
Dr. Bahjat Bader 832642
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim 830432

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Skies will be partly cloudy during the day becoming relatively cool at night with a chance of scattered showers in the northern parts of the Kingdom, and winds northwesterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 08/15
Aqaba 14/24
Deserts 04/14
Jordan Valley 13/23

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 15 Aqaba 25 Humidity readings: Amman 50 per cent, Aqaba 36 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Khalil Al Tushaq 757253
Dr. Bahjat Bader 832642
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim 830432

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Skies will be partly cloudy during the day becoming relatively cool at night with a chance of scattered showers in the northern parts of the Kingdom, and winds northwesterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 08/15
Aqaba 14/24
Deserts 04/14
Jordan Valley 13/23

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 15 Aqaba 25 Humidity readings: Amman 50 per cent, Aqaba 36 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Khalil Al Tushaq 757253
Dr. Bahjat Bader 832642
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim 830432

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Skies will be partly cloudy during the day becoming relatively cool at night with a chance of scattered showers in the northern parts of the Kingdom, and winds northwesterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 08/15
Aqaba 14/24
Deserts 04/14
Jordan Valley 13/23

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 15 Aqaba 25 Humidity readings: Amman 50 per cent, Aqaba 36 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Khalil Al Tushaq 757253
Dr. Bahjat Bader 832642
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim 830432

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Skies will be partly cloudy during the day becoming relatively cool at night with a chance of scattered showers in the northern parts of the Kingdom, and winds northwesterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 08/15
Aqaba 14/24
Deserts 04/14
Jordan Valley 13/23

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 15 Aqaba 25 Humidity readings: Amman 50 per cent, Aqaba 36 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Khalil Al Tushaq 757253
Dr. Bahjat Bader 832642
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim 830432

DEPARTURES

(No flights on Saturday)

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

06:00 Aqaba (add) (RJ)
07:15 Beirut (RJ)
11:00 Frankfurt (RJ)
12:20 Milan, Brussels (RJ)
12:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
13:00 Paris (RJ)
13:15 Cairo (RJ)
13:20 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
14:00 London (RJ)
21:10 Riyadh, Doha (RJ)
21:20 Bombay (RJ)
22:00 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
01:30 Aqaba, Paris (add) (RJ)
22:15 Jeddah (RJ)
05:30 Madrid (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

13:00 Riyadh (SV)
14:10 Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)
15:10 Sharjah (AH)
15:40 Doha (QR)
16:00 Dubai (EK)
19:00 Paris (AF)
20:25 Tel Aviv (LA)
21:10 London (BA)
21:40 Beirut (ME)
21:40 Cairo (MS)
23:20 Istanbul (TK)
23:35 Larnaca (CY)
01:15 Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)
03:00 Rome (AZ)

Royal Wings (RW)
(No flights on Saturday)

Royal Wings (RW)
(No flights on Saturday)

Royal Wings (RW)
(No flights on Saturday)

Royal Wings (RW)
(No flights on Saturday)

Royal Wings (RW)
(No flights on Saturday)

Joint chiefs chairman, U.S. general discuss regional situation

AMMAN (J.T.) — The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Jordan Armed Forces, Marshal Abdul Hafez Miri Kaabneh, conferred Thursday with Lieutenant General Carl Franklin, head of the U.S. Central Air Command.

They reviewed the general situation in the Middle East and discussed Jordanian-U.S. military cooperation, as well as issues of concern to the U.S. and the Jordanian armed forces.

U.S. Ambassador Wesley Egan and the commander of the Jordanian Royal Air Force were also present at the meeting.

The visit follows on the heels of the delivery of three F-16s, the last of a number of aircraft that Washington had promised to supply to help develop the Armed Forces.

The planes came as part of the \$215 million "Peace Falcon" programme, announced by former U.S. Secretary of Defence William Perry during his visit to the Kingdom last January.

The Peace Falcon programme includes 12 F-16A single-seat fighters, four F-16B fighters/trainers, and pilot training courses in the U.S.



Abdullah Khatib, rapporteur of Al Amal Centre Foundation Board of Trustees, and Michael Molloy, Canadian ambassador to Jordan, sign the agreement (Photo courtesy of Al Ra'i)

Canadian embassy donates JD15,000 to Al Amal for cancer awareness programme

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Canadian embassy and Al Amal Centre have signed an agreement under which the embassy will contribute JD15,000 to help fund a Public Service Announcement (PSA) project that Al Amal is planning to carry out, according to a press release from the hospital.

The agreement was signed Thursday by Canadian ambassador Michael Molloy and Abdullah Khatib, rapporteur of Al Amal Centre Foundation Board of Trustees.

The PSAs are part of Al Amal's ongoing efforts to increase public awareness about cancer and educate people about the importance of early detection and its role in

increasing the possibility of cure, which has now reached 90 per cent for some cancers when detected early enough, the statement said.

In this specific campaign, Al Amal will concentrate on early detection, especially of breast cancer, since this is the most prevalent type of cancer in Jordanian women and since it is usually diagnosed in later stages, it added.

The Canadian embassy is supporting this project because of its concern for supporting women's issues, of which breast cancer has become a prominent one. Supporting such awareness projects will also help save many women and their families from emotional

and economic burdens, since cancer discovered at an earlier stage usually needs less aggressive treatment, which means less disturbing side effects and reduced costs, the statement added.

Al Amal, which has been in operation for over a year now, is the first non-governmental, non-profit, specialised, comprehensive centre for cancer in Jordan and the region. Its services include screening and early detection, accurate diagnosis, treatment, and physical and psychological rehabilitation, as well as public awareness and education on cancer prevention and control.

Red Crescent to present medal to King

AMMAN (J.T.) — The general assembly of the Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS) has announced that it will present the Red Crescent Medal to His Majesty King Hussein in recognition of his continued support for the international Red Crescent and Red Cross societies and his support for their humanitarian causes.

The JNRCS, which celebrates its 50th anniversary

this year, took the decision at a general assembly meeting chaired by Mohammad Hadid, the society's president.

During its meeting, the general assembly endorsed the 1998 budget and reviewed an annual report on JNRCS activities in 1997.

A JNRCS report said invitations will be sent out to Red Crescent and Red Cross societies in the Arab

World to attend the society's celebrations, which will be held this year under Royal patronage.

According to the general assembly report, the JNRCS will continue implementing projects by the society's branches in the different governorates. These projects, the report noted, are designed to improve the health of needy people and provide medical services, particularly in the remote

villages of southern Jordan. The programme entails distributing medicine and vitamins, conducting medical exams of children and carrying out laboratory tests for patients free of charge.

The report noted that the JNRCS will pursue efforts to establish a home for the elderly, set up a plant to manufacture artificial limbs and go ahead with plans to carry out income-generating projects for needy families.

Jordan, Germany hold talks on development cooperation

AMMAN (J.T.) — Negotiations on Jordanian-German development cooperation were held in Bonn last week, during which the German delegation stated that Jordan will continue to receive high priority.

The talks took place between a Jordanian delegation headed by Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf and a delegation led by Fritz Fischer, director general at the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

During their talks, both sides praised the excellent state of cooperation between both countries, according to a press release. Even though the total development budget of Germany had declined, the German side was able to increase its commitment to Jordan once more in 1998.

The total amount committed for 1998 is approximately JD25 million, of which approximately JD19.5 million falls within the framework of financial cooperation. They will be used for projects in the sector of water supply and sanitation, including the construction of a wastewater treatment plant in Irbid, the statement said.

Priority projects in technical cooperation include water, wastewater, environment, institution building, private sector support, poverty alleviation and agriculture. Approximately JD5.5 million will be dedicated to projects in these sectors, the statement said.

Medical team announces death of five pilgrims in Saudi Arabia

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian medical mission accompanying this year's hajj to Mecca has reported the death of five pilgrims from Jordan and the Palestinian lands occupied since 1948.

It said the deceased, include three Jordanians, died of natural causes, mainly heart attacks or non-communicable and chronic diseases. They were buried in Mecca and Medina, the two most sacred sites for Muslims, the team added.

The mission's leader, Ja'far Hneiti, said the other pilgrims are in good health, adding that he has set up three medical centres in Mecca to provide any necessary medical assistance.

Dr. Hneiti said most of the pilgrims that have called at these centres suffer from exhaustion, which he attributed to walking long distances, about 15 kilometres a day, in the course of performing the pilgrimage rites.

Apart from the Jordanian pilgrims, the medical mission has been providing medical assistance to pilgrims from Turkey, Pakistan, Burma and India, among other nations.

According to Dr. Hneiti, the mission has been closely cooperating with Saudi medical centres and has referred some cases to hospitals in Mecca.

Dr. Hneiti's deputy, Raja'i Faris, was quoted by

the Jordan News Agency, Petra, as saying that the team has been dealing with at least 1,250 persons per day from Jordan and other nations.

Among the Jordanians performing this year's pilgrimage are Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Jawad Anani, Minister of Social Development Mohammad Khair Mamser, Minister of Education Mohammad Hamdan and Minister of Administrative Development Bassam Emoush.

These officials, who arrived in Mecca Thursday with Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Salam Abadi, are guests of the Saudi government.

Seminar opens with call for media to help bridge gaps between Arab, Western cultures

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Arab and Western media should play a "larger role in bridging the gap between" and enhancing the understanding of each of the two cultures instead of reflecting negative, preconceived images, University of Jordan President Fawzi Gharaibeh told a seminar Friday.

Speaking at the opening session of the three-day "Arabs and the West" seminar, Dr. Gharaibeh said the effects of technology and modern communications have helped turn the world into a global village, which in turn demands further understanding and cooperation based on improved media and cultural education.

"In order to enter the next millennium on the basis of cooperation and respect, old preconceived moulds and misconceptions should be changed in all aspects, including those of political, economic, social and educational issues," he said.

The seminar, organised by the University of Jordan in cooperation with the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations at Birmingham University and the University Institute of the Ortega y Gasset Foundation in Madrid, will be hosting researchers and participants from several Arab and European countries, including the U.K., Spain, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, and Germany, as well as Lebanon, Qatar,

Morocco, Tunisia and Jordan.

According to chairperson of the organising committee, "Sami Khasawneh," the seminar, held under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, aims at finding means of analysing the relationship between Arab and Western cultures and reaching a better conception of the nature of mutual images.

"Fixed negative images and stereotypes in both cultures impede further development and have to be changed through behaviour pattern studies and exchange of data," he said.

Mr. Khasawneh added that the seminar will include studies given by representatives of both cultures on the role of their educational system, films, theatre, and the media in setting up a mechanism that will help diminish old misconceptions.

"This seminar is the first step toward ensuring mutual respect and building greater trust as well as establishing better cross-cultural relationships," Mr. Khasawneh said.

Speaking on behalf of Prince Hassan, Kamel Abu Jaber, president of the Institute of Diplomacy, told participants that culture barriers were the result of distorted images and ignorance and that awareness of the need to reform those images has risen from new demands for interdependence and co-existence.

He said cultures must replace antagonism with partnership and cooperation, adding that widening the circle of dialogue on past events will help shape the days to come.

He quoted Crown Prince Hassan as saying that "the European understanding of Arab Islamic culture is limited... therefore a new mutual language for dialogue has to be reached."

The seminar will also tackle issues pertaining to the image of Arabs in European schoolbooks, the challenges facing Muslim and European co-existence, Islamic extremism and its impact on Western peace process as conveyed by Western media, Western images and attitudes towards Arabs and vice versa, cultural dialogue, and future hopes and expectations.

In his address, Ramon Mestres, economic counsellor of the European Commission delegation in Jordan, said the EC supports and follows a number of events relating to Islam and the West, Islam and Europe, as well as Europe and the Arab World. He said the "meetings of academics, religious groups and related institutions are encouraged to help break down the prejudice and fanaticism born of a lack of knowledge and understanding of the other."

"To speak of Arabs, the West and media, and to found mechanisms for active cooperation and mutual understanding is no small challenge but it is a challenge well worth answering... we can start with respect and tolerance," he added.

Circassian folk dancing troupe to perform in Amman Sunday

AMMAN (J.T.) — A night of Circassian folk dancing will be held in Amman Sunday at the Palace of Culture at Al Hussein Sport City, according to Mohammad Sami, the secretary of the preparatory committee.

The Nalmass folklore group from Adiga Republic of Russia will perform under the patronage of HRH Prince Ali.

Dr. Sami said the dancers will present the Circassian story through known dances such as Qafa and Yeslamah, as well as other new dances.

"Qafa is the slow dance that shows the nobility, grace and pride of these people," said Dr. Sami. "Yeslamah the dance where knights compete to show their strength and ladies compete to show their softness."

Pop artist transforms 'junk' into reflection of reality

By Ahmed Naser
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Items and materials that most people consider "junk" present Pop artist Mohammad Shamari with an opportunity to mirror the environment with his works of art.

Art has been a medium of expression for Mr. Shamari, 36, since his days as a child in Iraq, when he would use water colours his father bought him to paint still life pieces.

Later on in his early twenties, he began playing guitar but decided to complement his musical talent with "something tangible." He adopted Pop art as a medium of expression.

In his earliest works, he used engine parts and other industrial materials to express his view of the industrial reality around him in Iraq at that time.

"People like to touch smooth surfaces, which is why I used steel in my first attempts," Mr. Shamari said.

In his most recent Pop art efforts, which are on display at the Ruwaf Al Balqa Gallery beside Zuwadeh in Fuhais, Mr. Shamari has taken a "greener view" of life.

In the works at Fuhais, he uses biodegradable materials such as sackcloth,

plywood and a mixture of white-powder gypsum and glue as a filler, which he layers and then paints "moodily" and arbitrarily with water colours.

"The environment is there around us, each and every day," Mr. Shamari said. "Since art is a reflection of reality, I have chosen to portray the effects of environment with elements from the environment itself."

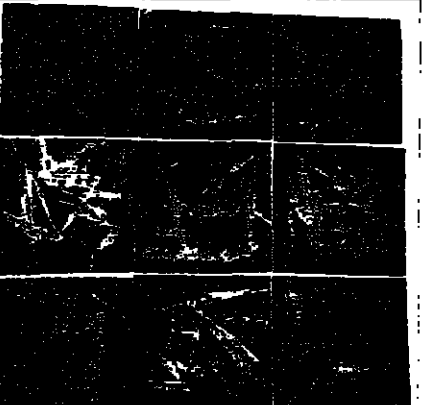
The end product, which is given a coat of tar mixed in with kerosene for longevity, is either burnt or showered with water depending on the effect that Mr. Shamari wants.

"When I burn or shower something, I am attempting to give the whole work a sense of unity," he said.

The creation process can take between a week and ten days. In the majority of the cases, as with most artists, Mr. Shamari said he feels displeased with the end result and discards the work completely.

Mr. Shamari then waits for "the right opportunity" to begin another work. "Each work is an expression of a mood that I experience,"

Yet unlike most artists, Mr. Shamari does not feel that his works are an extension of himself. "Even if I truly admire a work that I create, I do not feel attached to it in any



One of the new pieces by Mohammad Shamari on display (Photo by Ahmed Naser)

form or manner," he stressed. "Once I have completed a work, I immediately disown it."

The works have "caught the eye" of Greater Amman Municipality Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi, who recently visited the exhibition and showed his interest in purchasing a number of these works, said Mr. Shamari. The exhibition will continue until Monday.

Environmental programme concludes teacher, student training workshop

By Ahmad Khatib
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Global Learning and Observing to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE) programme recently concluded a three-day workshop to train students and teachers on the need to protect nature.

The workshop, which ended on Thursday, examined ways to deal effectively with the major aspects of nature, including the atmosphere, hydrology, soil and land cover/biology, according to Khuloud Theishat, GLOBE environmental and educational consultant.

Under the plan, students will learn how to observe the environment around them and conduct exper-

iments that are interpreted according to a certain scientific manual written by American scientists and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

The programme also aims at strengthening the relationship between local schools regarding environmental awareness.

"If the teacher gets enough training, he/she will be the everlasting expert for students because his/her role is very essential," Ms. Theishat told the Jordan Times.

"We are seeking to create a GLOBE network to cover all parts of the Kingdom," she added.

The workshop's agenda included an introduction to GLOBE protocols, class exchanges and fieldwork, as

well as an introduction to the role of computers and the Internet in helping preserve the environment.

"It is important to train participants how to use the Internet to enable them to send results on their experiments and research via the Internet to concerned universities and centres, such as NASA," said Ms. Theishat.

Jordan has 16 schools following GLOBE's hands-on environmental science programme, which unites students, educators and scientists from around the world in studying the global environment.

Thirty-six teachers and 44 students from all Jordanian areas attended the seminar.

"All these schools have been provided with scientific laboratories and

computers with access to the Internet donated by Global One, an Internet service provider," explained Ms. Theishat.

Deir Alla's Ma'adi secondary school in the Jordan Valley became the first school to send accurate land cover information to the University of New Hampshire in the U.S., said biology teacher Abdul Hafez Hawareth.

"We successfully managed to establish a weather station in our school that allows us to take accurate readings of heat and other climate changes," Mr. Hawareth told the workshop. "We send our readings to NASA, which compares them to its satellites' readings."

He said the school was working on

a project to replace an environmentally-harmful gas used for sterilising soil in the Jordan Valley with solar power.

Wijdan Abbadi, teacher at Fatimah Zahra secondary school in Marj Al Hammam, said her school has held many activities to implement GLOBE environmental protection programmes.

"In our school we organise competitions to find the best solution for each environmental problem," she said. "In addition, we recently started issuing a magazine that tries to treat such problems by focusing on the points of view of both experts and people."

Ma'adi school student Musa'b Manasir, 16, said he hoped to learn a

lot from the workshop.

"After participating in GLOBE's programmes, I found out that human beings are the most harmful power to the environment," said Musa'b. "Therefore, they have to immediately start saving what can be saved."

GLOBE last year signed an agreement with the Friends of the Environment allowing the latter to work as Jordan's GLOBE coordinator.

In the United States, GLOBE is administered by a federal team which includes the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NASA, the National Science Foundation, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Education, working jointly with over 25 public and local organisations.

what's going on

AMMAN INTERNATIONAL THEATRE FESTIVAL

SATURDAY

* Dramatic reading "Al Munsaf" at Osama Al Mashini Theatre, Abdali at 6:00 p.m.

* Palestinian play "A Bridge for Ever" and Tunisian play "Othello" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 7:30 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. respectively.

SUNDAY

* Dramatic reading "Al Munsaf" at Osama Al Mashini Theatre, Abdali at 6:00 p.m.

* Closing ceremony: Musical concert at the Royal Cultural Centre, main theatre at 9:00 p.m.

FILMS

* Spanish film "Behene-bros" (pt. II) at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman at 5:00 p.m.

* Cuban film "Hello Hemingway" (with subtitles in English) at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman on Sunday April 5 at 5:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Works by Mohammad Al Shamari at Ruwaf Al Balqa Gallery, Fuhais, until April 7.

* Exhibition of electrical equipment, home appliances, clothing, perfume, sweets (marking the advent of 'Eid Al Adha) at the University of Jordan, until April 7.

* Paintings on handmade paper at Noor Al Hussein Foundation, off Wadi Sagra St. (Tel. 5699141/2), until April 25.

* "Modern Jordanian Ceramics" by Raed Al Dahleh at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman, until April 10.

* Works by Jordanian artist Youssef Badawi at Dar Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh until April 9 (Tel. 4643251/2). Also displaying a private collection of Mamdouh Bisharat entitled "A Vision, An Identity" and works by contemporary Arab artists — "The New Collection."

Hopes rise of Northern Ireland peace deal as deadline nears

LONDON (AFP) — Hopes that Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland could strike a peace deal next week rose Friday after London and Dublin made progress on bridging their differences.

Prime Minister Tony Blair and his Irish counterpart Bertie Ahern made "some progress" in late-night talks Thursday in London on the thorny issue of north-south bodies to link Ulster with the Republic of Ireland, Irish sources said.

With less than a week to go before the April 9 deadline for an agreement set by talks chairman, former U.S. Senator George Mitchell, there was a mood of cautious optimism among negotiators that a peace deal is within their grasp.

Gerry Adams, leader of the Sinn Féin political wing of the IRA, said: "I believe there can be agreement within this deadline and if by some chance we miss that deadline, then the agreement is still up there for grabs."

"It's my conviction that we will get an agreement... The question is not if we will get it, the question is when we will get it," he told the BBC.

Britain's Northern Ireland Secretary, Mo Mowlam, for her part, said in a BBC interview that "progress is being made" and that a deal was possible by next Thursday "despite some of the headlines."

The Northern Ireland conflict, which ignited in the summer of 1969 after 48 years of peace, has claimed more than 3,200 lives.

On one side, the Catholic nationalists ultimately want a united Ireland, while the Protestant unionists want nothing that threatens British rule.

Mr. Blair and Mr. Ahern met for about 40 minutes Thursday evening in a bid

to bridge the gap which has built up between their governments on the key question of how much power the cross-border bodies should have.

A three-hour discussion Wednesday night had ended in deadlock, with Mr. Ahern suggesting that the peace process could break down if Britain insisted on downgrading the bodies to mere "ad hoc chat shows."

The north-south link has proved most controversial of all the issues under negotiation as the peace talks approach their denouement

after nearly two years.

Both Dublin and nationalists are insisting that the cross-border institutions should have executive powers for them to have any meaning.

But the unionists are demanding that they have no such powers, which they see as an unacceptable dilution of London's rule.

The two leaders planned to meet again for the third time in 48 hours Friday on the margins of the European summit to try to thrash out an agreed position on the peace process.

Mr. Blair and Mr. Ahern aim to give Mr. Mitchell ideally for him to present with his version to the peace negotiators in Belfast.

Any delay beyond Monday could place in jeopardy Thursday's deadline. Assuming an agreement is reached then, the proposed settlement would afterwards be put to referendum in both the north and south of Ireland on May 22.

However, progress has been made on the other key aspect of the proposed deal under discussion, which envisages a semi-autonomous Northern Ireland remaining under British rule.

Unionists seem to be prepared to share power within a new assembly, to allay Catholic concerns about the in-built Protestant majority in the province.

But the tension surrounding the negotiations increased after Irish police discovered a huge car bomb on its way to Britain Thursday.

Officers intercepted a car queuing to board a ferry to Wales, containing nearly 455 kilos of explosives — a similar device to the massive IRA bomb which devastated London's Canary Wharf business district in February 1996.

Police sources said this was the first indication that extreme dissident Catholic groups opposed to the peace process were willing and able to start a bombing campaign on the British mainland in a bid to wreck the multi-party talks.

Speculation on the bomb's destination centred on the Aintree horse racing festival at Liverpool, where the Grand National will be held Saturday, and the ASEM-2 summit of 25 European and Asian nations which began in London Friday.

Fresh inquiry opens into 'Bloody Sunday'

LONDON (AFP) — A fresh inquiry opened Friday into the "Bloody Sunday" massacre of 26 years ago, when 14 Catholics on a civil rights march were killed by British soldiers.

In a symbolic gesture, the three judges charged with conducting the inquiry officially launched their investigations in Londonderry, site of the January 30, 1972, massacre that has proved an enduring thorn in the side of Anglo-Irish relations.

The judges, from Britain, Canada and New Zealand, will only begin interviewing witnesses in the autumn, but Friday's formal opening was lent extra significance as all-party peace talks on the future of Northern Ireland entered a decisive phase.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair agreed at the end of January to order a fresh inquiry into the massacre, despite opposition from the army and Protestant loyalists.

Even 26 years after the event, "Bloody Sunday" retains a prominent position in the collective memory of Ireland, north and south of the border.

"I'll never be able to forget that day. The British Army had shot people who tried to escape and protect themselves," said Gerry Duddy, 41, whose 17-year-old brother was killed by a bullet in the back during the march.

"It was a peaceful demonstration. Suddenly we heard firing and everybody began to run for a cover," Mr. Duddy recalled.

An official British inquiry immediately after the massacre had concluded that the British soldiers had started shooting only after coming under fire themselves.

Independent witnesses however claimed that none of the victims had been armed and that the troops were not under attack when they opened fire.

"There never was a provocation from our side," Mr. Duddy said.

"As far as I am concerned, I have no doubt that the army wanted to spread fear among the Catholics and issue a warning in order to put an end to the troubles."



Leading Chinese dissident, Xu Wenli, 54, is pictured in Beijing. Xu's wife, He Xintong, reported that security police raided the couple's home on Friday, carting off Xu, his computer, letters and photographs (Reuters photo)

Chinese dissident Xu Wenli arrested

BEIJING (AFP) — Chinese police Friday detained Xu Wenli, one of the key dissidents behind the "Democracy Wall" campaign of the 1970s, his wife told AFP.

Police searched their home and took away his computer and fax machine after examining his files, said the wife, He Xintong. Police filmed the raid, she added.

She said police told her that 54-year-old Mr. Xu was being held under a "normal" procedure and that she would know after 24 hours whether charges would be made.

Another dissident, Qin Yongmin, said the detention was "serious." Mr. Qin said Mr. Xu had always acted within the law. "Xu Wenli has always been a moderate dissident," said Mr. Qin.

Mr. Qin highlighted how the detention came just after President Jiang Zemin had promised "the international community that China will respect universal human rights."

Xu Wenli spent 12 years in jail after taking part in the 1978-79 Democracy Wall movement alongside Wei Jingsheng, who has since become a rival in the dissident movement. Mr. Wei was released from prison last November, after 18 years, and went to the United States.

Xu Wenli was briefly detained in February as he prepared to meet an American journalist in a Beijing restaurant.

In March he took the Chinese authorities at their word after they said they would sign the U.N. Convention on Political and Civil Rights, calling on Beijing to allow him to set up a human rights organisation. There was no reply to his request.

His arrest comes amid reports that pro-democracy activist Wang Dan would be released from jail before U.S. President Bill Clinton's first visit to China in late June.

Mr. Wang's mother said Friday she had no news on a reported deal and would be visiting her son in prison Saturday.

"I've heard about that report in the New York Times about Wang Dan being released, but I haven't heard any news myself," Wang Lingyun said by telephone.

"There have been no developments here, but we are travelling up to the prison in northeast China tomorrow to see Wang Dan."

The New York Times reported Thursday that China and the United States had cut a deal over the release of Wang Dan, a student leader who served four years in jail after the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, and was arrested again in May 1995 for subversion and sentenced to 11 years in prison.

The daily said Mr. Wang, 29, would be released for medical reasons and sent into exile before Mr. Clinton's visit.

Quoting senior officials, it said the move was part of an agreement last month by which the United States would drop sponsorship of a United Nations resolution condemning China's human rights policies.

China's foreign ministry has denied the report.

"If you believe there is such an arrangement, I can tell you that there is no such arrangement between the two countries," foreign ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao said.

Calculating the time left for investigation of the Clintons

WASHINGTON (AP) — With the Paula Jones lawsuit gone and time running out on his grand jury, independent prosecutor Kenneth Starr is pressing to wrap up his criminal investigation as an emboldened White House steps up its attacks.

Even Republicans, who would decide whether to launch an impeachment inquiry against President Bill Clinton, paid deference to the magnitude of the Jones ruling.

"Unless there is an open-and-shut case, the kind which would result in a resignation, as happened with President Nixon, I do not think there ought to be an impeachment proceeding," said Sen. Arlen Specter.

Mr. Clinton even got some kind words Thursday from House Speaker Newt Gingrich. "Bill Clinton has plenty of courage," Mr. Gingrich said in an interview taped by CNBC. "Anyone who's taken the beating he has and stood up every morning has a lot of courage."

But Gingrich said he thought the Jones case dismissal would not affect house preparations for possible impeachment.

The dismissal put Mr. Starr on the defensive. He went public to say that part of the reason his investigation was taking so long was that witnesses in some instances were refusing to answer questions, resulting in lengthy court battles.

Mr. Starr is investigating an alleged presidential affair and cover-up involving former White House volunteer Monica Lewinsky.

Prosecutors have been looking into possible obstruction of justice in their investigation of Hillary Rodham Clinton's actions at the Rose Law Firm in Little Rock, Arkansas, in the 1980s on behalf of a failing savings and loan owned by her business partner, Jim McDougal. Mr. Clinton was governor of Arkansas at the time.

One of her law partners

at the time, former Associate Attorney General Webster Hubbell, also has been under investigation regarding payments he received from the president's friends in 1994, when he faced possible indictment in Mr. Starr's inquiry into the Clintons' land dealings in Arkansas.

Prosecutors also were investigating whether the president may have lied about never having taken out a loan from Mr. McDougal's savings and loan.

Democrats tried to keep the pressure to end the probe.

"Clearly Ken Starr is going to have to enter into an exit strategy," said Sen. Robert Torricelli.

Returning from a 12-day trip to Africa, the president basked in the absence of a sexual harassment lawsuit that has plagued him since 1994. As he stepped off a helicopter late Thursday and walked up the South Lawn towards the White House, Mr. Clinton said: "This old place looks good. I'm glad to be home."

But Mr. Starr did not give Mr. Clinton much of a welcome, calling the president's top aide in for questioning at the U.S. courthouse earlier in the day. Mr. Clinton's chief of staff, Erskine Bowles, said many of the prosecutors' questions in his grand jury appearance focused on "what goes on at the White House."

In an extended exchange with reporters outside his home in McLean, Virginia, Mr. Starr said the judge's decision Wednesday throwing out Mrs. Jones' lawsuit did not weaken his investigation.

Mr. Starr also said the part of his investigation in Arkansas was "coming to a very important juncture." The grand jury that has been meeting for two years expires next month. Mr. Starr could seek to empanel a new one, but that would entail prolonging the Arkansas part of his investigation.

Paedophile who sparked royal commission jailed for sex offences

SYDNEY (AFP) — A self-confessed paedophile whose information to police led to a royal commission investigating child sex abuse was jailed Friday for a minimum nine years for offences against boys.

Colin Fisk, 49, pleaded guilty to 24 charges dating to 1975 — including indecent assault and homosexual intercourse.

His conviction came as Australia's Attorney General Daryl Williams told parliament that more than 1,800 suspected paedophiles are now under watch by police as part of a national crackdown on child sex abuse.

Williams said 1,854 suspects are being watched under a project codenamed Mandrake set up in 1994 and growing at the rate of 450 a year. "Some are convicted paedophiles, but the majority are suspects, to varying degrees," he said.

He said the federal police, with the cooperation of state police, monitored overseas travel by suspected paedophiles and investigated the use of the Internet to transmit child pornography.

"The Commonwealth government remains concerned about Australians who engage in paedophile activity overseas and is working closely with other countries to discourage such activity," he said.

Fisk alleged in a statutory declaration, tabled in

the New South Wales Legislative Assembly in December 1994, that police had protected well-known people who were paedophiles.

The declaration led to a paedophile reference being added to the terms of a royal commission into police corruption.

The royal commission reported last August that generations of Australian children had suffered enormous harm as police and authorities turned a blind eye to sex abuse by clergymen, church officials and teachers.

The report by Supreme Court judge James Wood, slammed years of neglect and under-funding of child protection services which he said pointed overwhelmingly to the need for a new approach to the care and protection of children.

Judge David Shillington told the District Court here that Fisk's victims were three boys, all aged 13 or 14, from dysfunctional families. One of them was deaf, and Fisk had used alcohol and marijuana to achieve his desires.

"It would be hard to exaggerate the potential ill-effects on young boys of this type of physical abuse," the judge said. "Their lives have been changed and degraded by your conduct."

Fisk had claimed he had the consent of the boys' parents.

French troops left Tutsis to be massacred by Hutus — report

KIGALI (AFP) — French troops sent to Rwanda on a humanitarian mission ignored the pleas of wounded Tutsis, leaving 1,000 people to be slaughtered by Hutu killers during the 1994 genocide, a human rights group charged Friday.

In a 111-page report, the London-based African Rights group chronicled the role played by French marine commandos in allowing the massacre of emaciated Tutsis clinging to life in Bissero, a hillside hamlet in the west, saying they told the Tutsis they would return in three days.

"The decision by the French soldiers to leave 2,000 terrified people — begging for their help — was inexcusable," it said. "The soldiers had vehicles, communication equipment and most important of all, they had arms," the report explained.

"Having been informed of the gravity of the situation, it is difficult to understand why they did not leave some soldiers to protect the refugees while they sought reinforcements, or indeed to imagine why it took them three days to return given the size of the country."

The Hutus killed close to 50,000 people at Bissero, according to the report.

"Standing on the hills of Bissero, it is impossible to deny the extent of the human suffering."

"Even today, they are covered with skulls and bones."

"Where cows once grazed and children played there are now, said one survivor, 'bones in practically every corner of the village.'"

"Human remains

impossible to identify, or even to count accurately, are scattered irreverently and are occasionally trampled on by local people who conspired in the killings."

Rwanda, as every year, is currently observing a week of mourning to mark the start of the civil war, in which Hutus slaughtered between 500,000 and 800,000 men, women and children before being defeated by an army of rebel Tutsis raised in Uganda.

The war was sparked by the death of Hutu president Juvenal Habyarimana when his plane was shot down over Kigali on April 6, 1994.

The remains of Bissero victims will be reburied — a ceremony that takes place at a different location each year — and a memorial will be erected there.

African Rights said that at Bissero, unusually, the Tutsis, native Abasesero, pygmyoid Twa and even local Hutus put up "a well organised and brave resistance" with stones, clubs and machetes for around a month against their attackers, who were "armed to the teeth" and being paid financial incentives by businessmen moving in among them so that they could not shoot without hitting their colleagues.

"When news of the refugees' resistance spread, it became a principle of almost national significance that they should all be killed," it said.

"Some of the most ruthless killers in the region and beyond were summoned to Bissero to eliminate them," it said.

Eventually, the report

said, the Hutus and Twa with the defenders defected, and "the Twa hunted down survivors with their dogs."

According to the African Rights report, some of the survivors came out of hiding in Bissero to plead for protection from passing French troops, who were reportedly using leading members of the genocidal Hutu militia as guides.

Citing eyewitness reports, the report said the French troops had refused to believe the Tutsis were in any immediate danger, but promised to return to Bissero in three days.

By the time they returned, around 1,000 Tutsis had been butchered.

The report's allegations are the latest in a series of accusations levelled at French troops and the French government over Rwanda, a former Belgian colony.

The row has prompted a French parliamentary inquiry, which began last month.

Tuesday, the French daily Le Figaro reported that the French government received very clear warnings that large-scale massacres could occur in Rwanda almost four years before the 1994 genocide.

Le Figaro claimed that the policy of Paris at the time was strongly influenced by the personal ties between then French President François Mitterrand and Habyarimana.

For four years leading up to the genocide, France provided military training, technical assistance and large amounts of equipment to the then Hutu government army.

Mexico expels two suspected ETA members

MADRID (AFP) — Two suspected members of the armed Basque separatist organisation ETA have been expelled from Mexico and were to arrive in Madrid Friday, the foreign ministry said.

The two were detained Wednesday in the eastern state of San Luis de Potosi and deported for not having a residence permit, the ministry said. They were placed on a plane bound for Madrid.

The ministry identified them as Mikel Etxebarria Izueta, 53, and Jesus Maria Lopez Gonzalez, 51.

A ministry spokesman praised Mexico for helping Spain in its fight against Basque separatist terrorism.

In November four suspected members of ETA were expelled from Mexico to Spain.

'Flu could kill 2,000 in Australia'

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — A deadly flu epidemic which may hit Australia in July could kill up to 2,700 people, Health Minister Michael Wooldridge said Friday.

Mr. Wooldridge said 3.5 million people of the nation's total population of 18 million could be affected by the "nasty" A-Sydney virus.

It was first found in Sydney and Canberra last

year and has caused severe flu outbreaks in North America, Japan and Hong Kong.

He said those most at risk of contracting influenza were the elderly, asthmatics, those with chronic respiratory disorders, diabetes or chronic cardiac disorders, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

He said those in the at-risk categories would be

immunised for free.

"A lot of people die from flu; we want to try and prevent that. It's a bad one this year so there's not a lot of time," he said.

World Health Organisation Deputy Director Alan Hampson said the flu would probably hit Australia between July and September. However, the timing could vary with weather patterns, he said.

Mexican general arrested in Chiapas massacre probe

MEXICO CITY — Mexican army officials said Thursday they were probing a massacre of 15 people in southern Chiapas state, including 10 children, in 1997. The highest-ranking army officer involved in the killing was arrested and charged with the crime.

The massacre occurred in the town of San Juan, Chiapas, where 15 people were killed and 10 children were injured. The army was accused of the killing.

The army's 1st Airborne Infantry Battalion was accused of the killing. The battalion's commander was arrested and charged with the crime.

The army's 1st Airborne Infantry Battalion was accused of the killing. The battalion's commander was arrested and charged with the crime.

The army's 1st Airborne Infantry Battalion was accused of the killing. The battalion's commander was arrested and charged with the crime.

The army's 1st Airborne Infantry Battalion was accused of the killing. The battalion's commander was arrested and charged with the crime.

The army's 1st Airborne Infantry Battalion was accused of the killing. The battalion's commander was arrested and charged with the crime.

The army's 1st Airborne Infantry Battalion was accused of the killing. The battalion's commander was arrested and charged with the crime.

The army's 1st Airborne Infantry Battalion was accused of the killing. The battalion's commander was arrested and charged with the crime.

The army's 1st Airborne Infantry Battalion was accused of the killing. The battalion's commander was arrested and charged with the crime.

The army's 1st Airborne Infantry Battalion was accused of the killing. The battalion's commander was arrested and charged with the crime.

The army's 1st Airborne Infantry Battalion was accused of the killing. The battalion's commander was arrested and charged with the crime.

The army's 1st Airborne Infantry Battalion was accused of the killing. The battalion's commander was arrested and charged with the crime.

The army's 1st Airborne Infantry Battalion was accused of the killing. The battalion's commander was arrested and charged with the crime.

U.S. print

Circassians: A determined people

By Aslan Bek Misost

ACCORDING TO legend, when God was creating the earth he carried all the mountains in a bag in order to distribute them across the land. The devil, seeing his chance, slit a hole in the bottom of the bag and all the mountains fell in one area between the Black Sea and Caspian. So God made that land the one place in the world where the devil would not be able to penetrate and make its people evil, since life would be hard enough for them as it is.

The Caucasus is described by many visitors as Eden itself, with warm, rich lowlands followed by majestic forests and alpine pastures, abundant rivers and lakes, superimposed by eternally snow capped peaks. These are the Frosty Caucasus of which Shakespeare sang, and which dwarf the Alps. Mount Elbrus, the highest mountain in Europe, where legend has it, between its two peaks the ark rested on its way to Ararat. Kazbek, where Prometheus was chained, known in Ancient Greek legend as the land of the Golden Fleece. The land of fables and dreams from which Tolstoy, Lermontov and Pushkin drew their inspiration.

It is from these mountains that the Circassians come, known in their own language as the Adigues, or noble people, famous for their beauty, symmetry of form, horsemanship, longevity and perfect manners.

The Circassians are an ancient race, composed of twelve tribes, who have been dwelling in the mountains of the North Caucasus and along the Black Sea coast since time immemorial. Many would-be invaders had found them a terrible foe: Roman legions, Atilla, Genghis Khan, Arabs, Tamerlane and the Persians who called the Caucasus Sedi Iskender, or the barrier of Alexander. The mighty conqueror had set out to possess the world and met his first check here. Having never been conquered, the Circassians have managed to preserve their ancient culture without outside influence up until the time of the Russian invasion which began in the late 18th century and which flamed into a terrible war which lasted over 100 years.

The Circassians, freedom loving

and bold, had fought desperately and fiercely, earning themselves legendary status and respect throughout Europe and the Middle East. For 100 years they held all the might of the Tsars' armies at bay preventing them from colonial expansion and the long cherished Russian dream of an overland route to India. It was said that one Circassian is worth ten of anyone else, and their struggle is best described by the great Russian poet Mikhail Lermontov who wrote in the times of the Russo-Caucasian wars: "Circassian treasure rueful dreams, Circassian hearth is their supreme, but freedom, freedom for the man is more than peace and Motherland."

The war lasted until 1864 resulting in the death of over half the entire Circassian population, and the two great powers of the time Russia and Turkey collaborated to cause the forced migration of over half the entire remaining population to the Ottoman Empire. Russia wanted the Circassian lands for its emancipated peasants, and Turkey needed fresh blood for its armies in the Balkans. The Circassian expulsion was the largest mass exodus in modern times and another third of them perished along the way from disease and starvation. It is estimated that if not for the war Circassians today would number over 25 million or more instead of less than 5 million spread out in countries all over the world.

Yet wherever the Circassians went they contributed tremendously to the countries that they now live in. They were the first people to settle in and revive modern Amman. When Prince, later King Abdullah arrived in Transjordan they welcomed him, and during a rebellion in the early days of the Emirate they camped around his palace to protect him and were then given the honour of being the King's personal guards. Nowadays they can still be seen guarding the palaces and Royal Court in their fabulous and Roman costumes.

The Circassians have served in every government and military office and are well-known for their honesty, and loyalty. Today the 100 thousand Circassians form an integral part of Jordanian society, and have fared much better than their brethren in Turkey, Syria and the Caucasus, thanks to the cultural tol-

erance of the Jordanian monarchy and people.

The Circassians practised civilised behaviour at a time when Europeans were still cave dwellers. Their culture is extremely rich in poetry, myth, legend, song, dance and music. Their social structure is governed by the "Adiga Khabza" or Circassian etiquette, a set of unwritten rules which emphasise perfect manners, hospitality, honesty, chivalry and respect for elders. They esteem their woman and grant them full public freedom and they never practice polygamy or marry anyone even distantly related to them as all Circassian relatives and neighbours are considered brothers and sisters. Indeed the Circassians' greatest achievement has been a perfection of their own culture.

Nonetheless Circassians are finding it increasingly hard to preserve their culture, traditions and language and since to advertise their plight would be considered shameful, they are facing widespread assimilation. The ancient Circassian proverb "he who loses his homeland loses all," rings hauntingly in the ears of those Circassians who struggle to maintain themselves. Many of the younger generation no longer care about their cultural heritage, considered one of the most romantic and beautiful in human history, simply because, "he who does not know his history or language cares not about his future."

The Circassian Nation is like an old man dwelling on the memories and dreams of yesterdays. Nevertheless, with the collapse of Communism, the great advances in communication technology, and widespread recognition of human rights, Circassians now have the chance to achieve a social and cultural rebirth, expand their links with their brethren in the Caucasus and the diaspora, which would also benefit the countries in which they live and be recognised and known once again to the world for what they are, a beautiful and romantic people whose only wish is to revive and maintain their culture, speak their language and live in freedom, peace and happiness.

The writer is a Jordanian researcher in Circassian history. He contributed this to the Jordan Times

A fear of historical repetition: the case of Russia

The North Caucasus and the Interests of Russia
By P.M. Ivanov
Alpha Publishing
Moscow, Nalchik 1997

WHAT MAKES the book, The North Caucasus and the Interests of Russia, remarkable is its honest and objective analysis of the state of affairs in Russia and the Russian Federation. A poignant point, which the book makes, is that although Russia appears to be moving away from a totalitarian regime towards democracy, there is a visible threat for Russia to repeat the path of the former Soviet Union; that is to say, another convulsion leading to break-up.

What makes this threat so real? First, instead of the declared democratisation of society, authoritarian practice is being established on both federal and regional levels. Second, property, industry, law enforcement and other important functions of the federation go under the jurisdiction of regional governments, leaving the federal government powerless. Third, the political elite of Russia is failing to realise that the country is ready to split into its many different components.

Russia has turned into a state where a direct agreement between the regions is basically identified with and can substitute the agreements on a national level. Such an association of regions and republics, which is looked upon as a federal system, lacks a common economic space and a common political environment. Thus there are no political parties on a national level that could wield real power. In fact the executive and legislative branches of government are transforming into political parties that pursue their own interests. The shift to market economy has turned into the seizure of property by force, and into criminal privatisation. As a result, a new form of Russian capitalism has emerged, which the author calls "criminal capitalism."

What are the features of this new "capitalism"? The author states the following:

1. More than half of the gross national product is misappropriated by means of force, corruption and robbery.
2. More than half of the Russian population lives below the poverty level.
3. The governing party in Russia funds a perfect medium for growth in the prevailing conditions mentioned above. The political stranglehold grows in the hands of the elite (similar to that of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union).

The author's proof to the above statements is the war in Chechnya, which could have and should have been avoided. That war brought Russia to a dangerous line beyond which a national catastrophe could be foreseen. The USSR, invincible from the outside, was destroyed from within. Russia might follow the same pattern if it does not change its national and regional policies in the North Caucasus.

Under these conditions the answer to the question "What is Russia?" becomes extremely important. Russia is as unpredictable as it is huge. Its unpredictability is determined by the imperial authoritarian thinking inherited from the communist past, by the lack of genuine federalism and economic prosperity, and by the unpredictability of its constituent parts. While remaining a multinational empire on the verge of break-up, Russia finds itself in serious constitutional crises. The first step towards disintegra-

tion was made in Chechnya. Further problems are about to rise in Dagestan, Tatarstan, Tyva, Yakutia, and Buryatia. The constitutions of these republics contradict the constitution of Russia. The Republic of Tyva for example, constitutionally secures its right to separate from Russia.

This disturbing but also stimulating book raises many questions for serious reflection. What are the odds for Russia to repeat the fate of the USSR? How can the political situation in Russia affect Europe and the world? Can any reform be effective when the present political elite is in power? Can Russia build a society based on the ideals of democracy and federalism? When will Russia become a country that does not pose a threat to other peoples and nations? What is the reason for the sudden change in the Yeltsin of 1991 to present-day Boris Yeltsin?

It is only an illusion that the team of reformers "Yeltsin-Chubais-Nemtsov" runs the country. In reality we have witnessed the transformation of the Soviet "Communist" party elite that was in power before 1991 into a new political elite that leans on new gears of domination over society. The author's contention is that as long as this elite hold power, we shall not experience true reform in Russia.

The so-called Russian threat to Europe and the rest of the world is no longer an expansionist threat. But Russia remains a world nuclear power with a mighty arsenal of weapons and delivery systems. Some observers believe that the new "capitalism" driven by the governing elite might market some of this arsenal to pariah states or criminal organisations. Although this is a far-fetched scenario, should it occur, the semi-peaceful world we know today will never be the same.

Most "Russia" observers can see the emergence and growth of two diagonally opposed political forces in the country. On the one hand we have the Russian nationalist movement which wants to concentrate on Russia proper (Dom Rossiya) ignoring or even dropping the non-Russian entities of the federation to strengthen its own nationalist objectives. This is mostly represented in the Russian parliament (The Duma). On the other hand we have the so-called "democratic

reformist" movement as represented by the governing elite which continues the criminal consolidation of power and property and ignores the serious regional (federal) problems because it has no real policies for these regions, other than siphoning wealth and collecting federal taxes.

These two forces are on a collision course in the foreseeable future. The outcome for the North Caucasus might be the same if either of the two forces wins, i.e. separation from Russia. What happens to the North Caucasian republics (peoples and institutions) will depend entirely on the Caucasians themselves and the quality of their leadership at the time of the "Big Bang."

P.M. Ivanov is a professor and doctor in technical science and a specialist in management, computer systems and analysis. He is a member of The International Academy of Sciences (Munich, Germany), New York Academy of Science and the Russian Academy of Natural Science. At present he is the director of Computer Science and Problems of Regional Management (Russian Academy of Science).

Dr. Mohy I. Quandour

The Saturday Crossword

HIDDEN FOREST

By Annabel Michaels, Williamsburg, Virginia

ACROSS

- 1 Type horn
- 6 Layered pavement
- 13 Map collections
- 20 Rubber capital of the world
- 21 Walkway of the Southwest
- 22 Leak stopper
- 23 Secondary locations
- 25 Out of the ordinary
- 26 Yr's counterpart
- 27 Scottish Gaelic
- 28 Penultimate Greek letter
- 30 First name of 980
- 31 Varsity
- 32 One: prof.
- 33 More frequently
- 37 Exchange
- 38 Negatively charged atoms
- 40 Genealogical chart
- 43 "Gotta Be Me"
- 44 Fragrant to drive a golf ball
- 45 Nebula
- 46 Operative, as sneakers
- 48 Samson's undergarment
- 50 Accuse a public official
- 52 Roadside purchase
- 55 Perpetuating
- 56 Negatively charged atoms
- 57 Phil's drum
- 61 Gulf of the Jordan Sea
- 63 Subpoena on "Star Trek: Deep Space Nine"

DOWN

- 1 Tended lots
- 2 View's country
- 3 Mom's mom
- 4 Extended
- 5 Bus, letter abbr.
- 6 New Zealand
- 7 London et al.
- 8 Coffee shop
- 9 Friend in France
- 10 Mo. winner begins
- 11 Veto
- 12 "Ain't Lincoln in."
- 13 Silly billy
- 14 Asian holiday
- 15 Zhang's love
- 16 Shepard and King
- 17 Pictorial's placards
- 18 Inscribe
- 19 Sketched
- 24 Female foil
- 25 From a bank
- 32 Diamante mortise joints
- 33 Nebraska city
- 34 Repair
- 35 Business violently active
- 36 Actor Aubrey
- 39 African-lute
- 40 Three-time
- 41 Jal

64 Fairy-tale monsters

65 French school

66 Add muscle

67 Homestead brick

68 Court proceedings

69 Broadcasting

70 Joyce Carol

71 Team cheer

72 Piece of Puccini

73 Titles

74 Naval vacations

75 Susan of "L.A. Law"

76 Snobbish

77 Cooperative agreement

78 Erie Stanley

79 More chipmunk

80 Strongman of myth

81 Gradually slower

82 In music abbr.

83 "Flower" star

84 Mysterious

85 Dose wrong

86 American biologist

87 Writer "Ten"

88 AFL

89 Touches against

90 "I, el conical"

91 Pre-school lesson

92 Chaffeur-driven wheels

93 Rivers resort

94 Spent a restful night

95 Fruits

96 Fall as ice

97 Phil's creator

98 Consider beneath contempt

99 Maui and Manhattan

100 on (victimize)

90 New Deal agency

91 Ball of comedy

92 Payment to an ac

93 Comic threesome

94 Gridlock

95 1992 Wimbledon winner

96 City on the Irish

101 Landing area

102 Corrosive substances

103 Partial prefix

104 Business letter abbr.

105 Used leeches

106 Den

107 Jan. and Dec.

108 Full of dust

109 Conger's catch

110 Green veggie

111 Sovereign: abbr.

Networking catches on in transition to democracy

By Hind-Lara Mango
Special to the Jordan Times

GUMMESBACH, Germany — Networking, a term born of the 1980s and used then to describe the establishment and fostering of professional links between individuals in various sectors for mutual benefit, is now being applied on a broad scale to encourage democratic processes.

"Networking coordinates people and does not have a clear line differentiating between the head of the organisation they belong to and the rest of the members," said Anders Johnson, member of the Swedish liberal party.

In a week-long seminar on "Transition to Civil Society and Democracy: Improving Political Participation," Mr. Johnson spoke about accommodating networks rather than hierarchies in democratic institutions.

"People join a network because they feel that it will fulfill their goals. Like in a hierarchy you could have ranks in a network, but unlike a hierarchy, you do not

have a definite structure," Mr. Johnson said.

He explained that cooperation takes horizontal form in a network whereby decisions are made at the lower levels. In a hierarchy, he said, decisions are made in a vertical manner where commands are given from the top to the bottom.

He admitted that "almost all systems in society today are a combination of both hierarchical and networking methods," but it has been found that networks have been a means of economic and political development.

Jordan has already embarked networking as there have been initiatives to foster networks among non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the Arab World.

One such project is the Bunyan initiative of the Friedrich-Naumann Foundation in Jordan funded by the European Union. Bunyan aims at coordinating the activities of NGOs in the Arab World to stem duplication and unnecessary overlapping. In this manner it is believed that

NGOs will function more efficiently and effectively in the region.

Mr. Johnson pointed out that women have been proven to be better at networking than men and "this might be a future indicator that we will have many women leaders."

But there are certain factors that have to be considered when deciding on whether a network would be more suitable than a hierarchy. The degree of education [of the people involved in a network] determines whether that system is able to absorb a network or not.

"If the level of education is low, then a hierarchy would be more suitable," said Mr. Johnson adding that today's educational advances have tilted towards networking in industrialised states.

A network is flexible yet unpredictable compared to a hierarchical structure. Another precondition is a strong responsible civil society, working with openness and trust with other parts of the network.

Mr. Johnson said that networks are less hurtful to societies in transition: "Information technology is cheaper now if we want to compare it to the past. In addition, the modern educational system works on promoting the ability to learn through creativity and critical thinking."

Therefore, today the slogan is "growth not stagnation," he said. "A strong society is based on a system which promotes creativity and critical thinking. Transitions are thus subsidiary coming from the bottom upwards."

If organisational structures are to survive, concluded Mr. Johnson, then networking should be utilised to the fullest both internally and externally (beyond the direct realm of the system's function).

This seminar was organised by the Friedrich-Naumann Foundation in Germany and was attended by 26 participants from the Middle East, South Africa, Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe.

American Computer Fair highlights two major e-commerce development services

By Ahmed Naser
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — On-line computer pricing and a system for ordering products over the Internet were two major e-commerce development services unveiled at the American Computer Fair, which ended Thursday.

The system saves time and headaches for both employees and customers," said Fadi Kayyali, the company's owner. "Different parts, result in different prices... Customers can now get fast answers to different PC configurations."

The on-line system, the first of its kind in Jordan, was developed by Arabist, a regional Internet developer, and is available for view at www.kayyali.com.

Local BBS Primus announced that it will soon begin hosting an on-line order form for a third business. Ghadeer, a company that sells mineral water is scheduled to begin offering product on-line within the coming few days at

www.cns.com. "In the new on-line age of commerce, people are starting to promote their businesses, not just through newspapers and TV, (but also)... utilising the Internet," said Amer Nassereddin, Primus' marketing manager.

Primus is gradually becoming a leader in Jordan's infant e-commerce sector, as Ghadeer is Primus' third customer to offer a service on-line. In other developments at

the expo, Comcent Trading and Contracting, supplier of Wang Systems to the General Intelligence Department since 1976 is offering electronic archiving solutions.

Electronic archiving has recently picked up in the Kingdom as local dailies and governmental departments are seeking to replace large space consuming paper files with a digital format.

Dow shatters the 9,000-point barrier

NEW YORK (AFP) — Blue-chip stocks hit a new record high Friday, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average passing 9,000 points for the first time.

The new milestone was passed within minutes of the New York Stock Exchange opening at 9:30 a.m. (1430 GMT).

The Dow moved into record territory nine minutes after the opening bell following an initial fall below 8,986.64 points.

Stocks rose on news of higher-than-expected U.S. unemployment figures, which calmed inflationary fears, dealers said.

After breaking through the psychological 9,000-point barrier, the index gave up three points to 8,983.64 at 9:41 a.m. (1441 GMT).

The Dow, founded in 1896, is made up of 30 stocks considered most representative of the stock market.

The importance of the 9,000-point mark is above all psychological. The Dow pushed past the 8,000-point mark in July before the Asian markets crisis sparked fears of global recession.

Friday's announcement of data showing a slight increase in U.S. unemployment in March to 4.7 per cent from 4.6 in February appeared to suggest that the Asian financial crisis might slow U.S. economic growth slightly and thereby limit the chances of inflation picking up.

Breaking through the 9,000-point mark was accompanied by a slide on the bond market with the average rate on the benchmark 30-year Treasury bond below 5.80 per cent for the first time since January. The rate moves opposite to price.

"In short, we expect job growth to settle into a sustainable rate, money wages to remain around their current pace, real wages to continue to rise strongly, inflation to remain absent and the Fed to remain on hold," said Bruce Steinberg, chief economist at Merrill Lynch.

An increase in interest rates — the last one dates back to March 1997 — to stangle inflation would make bonds more attractive than stocks and could drive down the Dow.

At 11:50 a.m. (1650 GMT), the Dow was down 13.95 points at 8,972.69, off an early all-time high of 9,030.

REUTERS THE BUSINESS OF INFORMATION

Major Currencies & Cross Rates Prices as at 3/04/98 18:41									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.8484	0.6031	1.5278	135.00	1.4200	1622.55	2.0831	6.1959
DE Mark	0.5407	1.0000	0.3288	0.8280	73.01	0.7677	984.90	1.1281	3.3609
GB Sterling	1.6882	3.0681	1.0000	2.8341	223.83	2.3546	3022.15	3.4542	10.2740
CH Franc	0.8548	1.5057	0.3943	1.0000	88.37	0.8289	1192.22	136.27	4.0631
JP Yen	0.0074	1.3987	0.4481	1.1308	1.0000	0.0512	134.49	1.5421	4.6965
CA Dollar	0.7042	1.3048	0.4231	1.0784	1.08	1.0000	1287.82	1.4708	4.3729
IT Lira	0.0005	1.0143	0.3308	0.8538	1382.81	0.7788	1142	3.3981	
NL Guilder	0.4801	0.8875	0.2882	0.7333	64.78	0.8815	874.71	2.9737	
FR Franc	0.1814	0.2881	0.0971	0.2428	21.78	0.2289	33.58	33.5800	

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.8484	0.6031	1.5278	135.00	1.4200	1622.55	2.0831	6.1959
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	2.5988	0.8317	2.1384	151.03	1.8103	2155.15	4.8209	
Saudi Riyal	0.2686	0.4891	0.1606	0.97	0.0816	0.98	407.43	0.9114	
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	4.8006	1.6047	4.0481	298.8	3.4542	4242.15	10.2740	
Qatar Dinar	0.2748	0.4947	0.1630	1.0300	0.0841	1.01	419.88	0.9388	
Kuwait Dinar	3.3664	6.1048	2.0348	5.1314	388.8	4.5442	5652.15	13.6740	
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.4930	0.1621	1.0268	0.0834	1.00	416.03	0.9306	
Lebanese L1000	0.65	0.4840	0.1644	0.4267	3.2629	0.2004	2.4037	2.2369	
Egyptian	0.2828	0.2074	0.0710	0.1103	1.0862	0.0895	1.0745	447.05	

Energy									
Commodity	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
Brent	13.87	25.04	8.34	20.87	1510.00	1.9104	2455.15	5.8209	
W. Texas	18.02	32.60	11.00	28.00	2050.00	2.5104	3155.15	7.8209	
Bonny	13.87	25.04	8.34	20.87	1510.00	1.9104	2455.15	5.8209	
Dubai	12.15	22.01	7.34	18.87	1380.00	1.7104	2155.15	4.8209	
UL Gas	161.00	281.00	93.00	236.00	17500.00	22.104	2855.15	71.209	

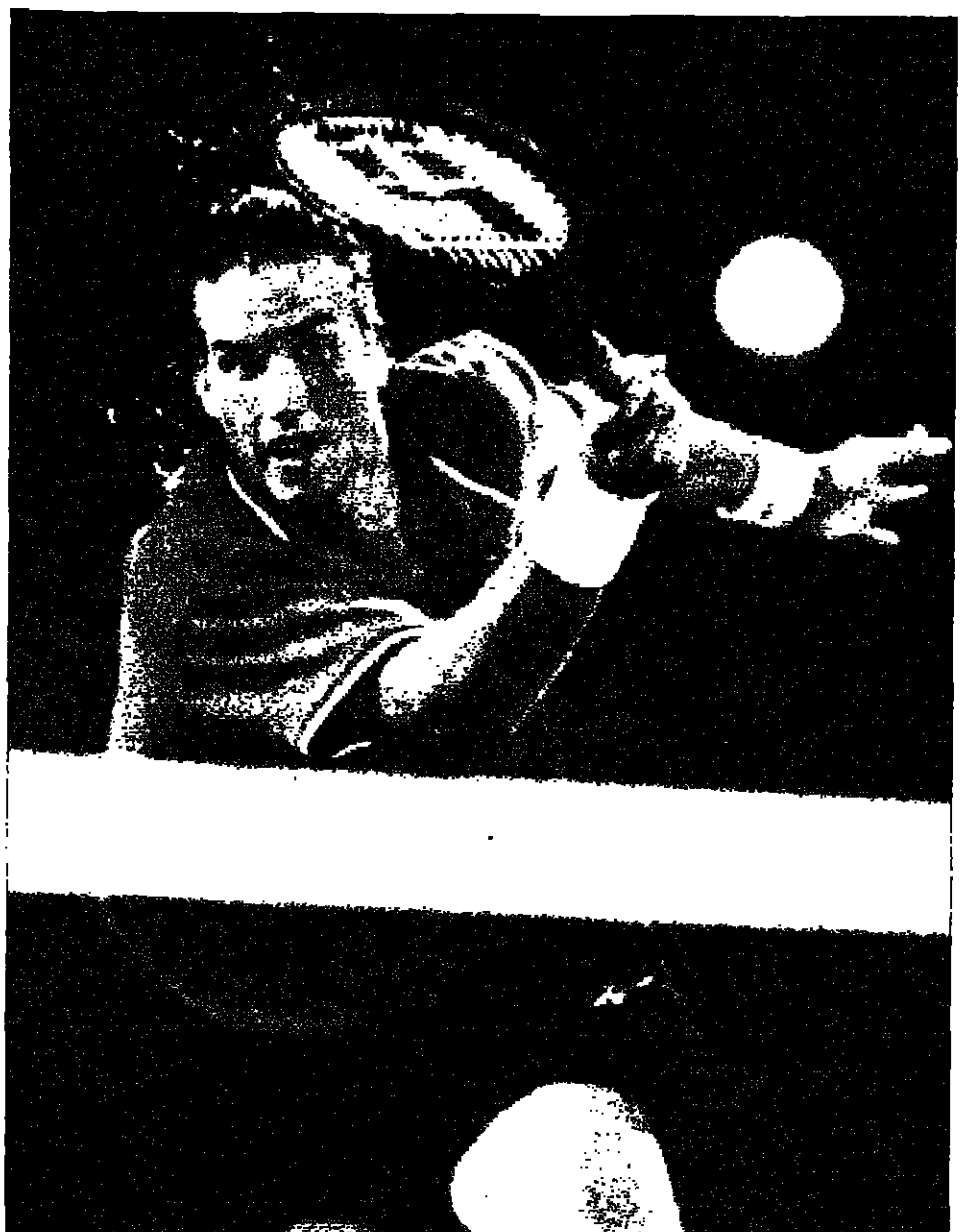
Mid-East Currencies									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
SA Riyal	0.2686	0.4891	0.1606	0.97	0.0816	0.98	407.43	0.9114	
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.4930	0.1621	1.0268	0.0834	1.00	416.03	0.9306	
KW Dinar	3.3664	6.1048	2.0348	5.1314	388.8	4.5442	5652.15	13.6740	
BH Dinar	0.3770	0.6877	0.2297	0.5874	436.51	0.5004	620.37	1.6369	
CY Pound	1.8814	3.4228	1.1158	2.8284	248.939				

Metal Prices									
Commodity	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
Gold (oz's)	306.2	550.7	193.8	480.7	35600.00	491.04	6242.15	15.6740	
Silver (oz's)	6.84	12.12	4.34	10.87	800.00	10.8104	1385.15	35.209	
Platinum (oz's)	411	743	268.8	668.7	49600.00	671.04	8542.15	21.6740	
AL (3 Months)	1402	2508	900.8	2248.00	166200.00	2151.04	27522.15	70.2740	
CU (3 Months)	1687	3002	1088.8	2748.00	203200.00	2781.04	35322.15	91.2740	
Zinc (3 Months)	1112	1982	708.8	1788.00	131200.00	1851.04	23522.15	60.2740	
Lead (3 Months)	582	1042	378.8	948.00	69200.00	951.04	12122.15	31.2740	
NI (3 Months)	5346	9582	3408.8	8582.00	632000.00	8581.04	108222.15	281.2740	

Libor Fixing									
Period	1-3	3-6	6-12	1-3	3-6	6-12	1-3	3-6	6-12
USD	5.5975	5.7578	5.7980	5.5975	5.7578	5.7980	5.5975	5.7578	5.7980
GBP	7.5158	7.5833	7.5833	7.5158	7.5833	7.5833	7.5158	7.5833	7.5833
JPY	0.7938	0.7917	0.7917	0.7938	0.7917	0.7917	0.7938	0.7917	0.7917
DEM	3.6374	3.7375	3.8248	3.6374	3.7375	3.8248	3.6374	3.7375	3.8248
FRF	3.6313	1.6719	1.7813	3.6313	1.6719	1.7813	3.6313	1.6719	1.7813
CHF	1.5825	3.6133	3.7188	1.5825	3.6133	3.7188	1.5825	3.6133	3.7188
ITL	5.6990	5.3630	5.0300	5.6990	5.3630	5.0300	5.6990	5.3630	5.0300

Main Equity Indices									
Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pr Cls	Index	Value	Chng
New York	DOW JONES	9006.83	19.19	0.21	9030.49	8946.29	New York	S&P 500	1124.83
New York	S&P 500	1124.83	4.82	0.41	1126.84	1118.12	London	FT-SE 100	6022.3
London	FT-SE 100	6022.3	-28.5	-0.34	6108.3	6024.5	Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	15617.78
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	15617.78	-188.12	-1.18	15858.3	15465.7	Paris	CAC 40	3832.02
Paris	CAC 40	3832.02	-3.86	-0.1	3887.82	3918.41	Frankfurt	DAX	5223.82
Frankfurt	DAX	5223.82	46.98	0.91	5246.04	5203.58			

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET															
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SINEIYAT															
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179															
ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (28/03/1998 - 01/04/1998)															
WEEKLY REPORT															
DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS		COMPANY NAME	P/E	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE PRICE	TURNOVER	NO. OF TRADING DAYS
HIGH	LOW														
345,000	335,000	ARAB BANK	13.7	1.20	27	1000	334685	341.00	338.00	332.50	334.50	-6.50	334.685	0.023	5
1,810	1,660	JOR. NATIONAL RE.	-	0.00	94	103755	173160	1.59	1.66	1.47	1.67	-0.02	1.664	0.247	5
1,350	1,250	BANK OF JORDAN	4.3	0.00	11	154678	193444	1.25	1.37	1.25	1.35	-0.10	1.251	0.82	3
1,020	1,070	MID-EAST INV. RE.	62.4	0.00	10	2654	2471	0.97	0.95	0.92	0.95	-0.02	0.931	0.027	4
1,740	1,710	INDUSTRIAL DEV. RE.	9.0	0.06	32	39000	47781	1.72	1.76	1.72	1.75	-0.03	1.738	0.221	5
5,000	4,850	THE HOUSING RE.	31.1	1.87	50	27147	134943	5.00	5.22	4.94	5.20	-0.20	5.135	0.054	5
1,910	1,870	JOR. KOWALT BANK	0.00	0.00	9	1074	1992	2.10	2.16	2.11	2.15	-0.05	1.923	0.007	2
1,710	1,630	JOR. GULF BANK	3.7	11.29	113	816213	504336	0.63	0.63	0.59	0.62	-0.01	0.618	0.001	5
2,800	2,800	ARAB JOR. INV. RE.	20.2	0.00	1	10000	28000	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.80	-	2.800	0.067	1
2,000	1,960	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	9.9	4.92	33	13758	25055	1.97	1.97	1.95	1.95	-0.02	1.964	0.070	5
1,050	1,020	UNION RE. SAV. INV.	164.2	0.00	1	700	722	1.02	1.03	1.03	1.03	-0.01	1.030	0.004	1
1,940	1,870	REIT. AL-HAL (REITMA)	17.86	0.00	5	1050	879	0.87	0.83	0.84	0.83	-0.03	0.837	0.053	4
2,940	2,940	ARAB BANKING CO.	21.3	0.00	1	4000	11760	2.94	2.94	2.94	2.94	-	2.940	0.027	1
BANKS SECTOR															
2,400	1,930	JOR. PREMIER INSUR.	5.7	12.32	35	302810	616680	1.96	2.05	1.98	2.03	-0.07	2.037	13.764	5
2,100	2,100	PRIMADELPHIA INSUR.	10.6	0.00	1	4000	8800	2.10	2.20	2.20	2.20	-0.10	2.200	0.333	1
INSURANCE SECTOR															
2,120	2,000	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	10.1	4.76	74	46248	96234	2.08	2.11	2.05	2.10	-0.02	2.081	0.308	5
2,250	2,070	IRBID ELECTRICITY	12.4	5.50	7	2650	5555	2.10	2.11	2.06	2.09	-0.01	2.094	0.088	3
5,500	4,520	SINGH MINERALS	46.9	0.00	5	650	3102	5.22	5.00	4.79	4.29	-0.39	4.772	0.588	4
3,510	3,320	UNION. COHESIVE FED.	12.3	3.75	3	1700	5448	3.51	3.32	3.20	3.20	-0.12	3.328	0.081	3
2,150	2,150	SKIPPING LINES	12.2	6.19	1	100	210	2.15	2.10	2.10	2.10	-0.05	2.100	0.001	1
1,150	1,020	NAEL. PORTFOLIO	40.7	0.00	68	47675	49149	1.07	1.07	1.02	1.02	-0.05	1.031	0.954	4
1,470	1,380	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	0.00	0.00	4	1800	484	1.40	1.38	1.38	1.38	-0.02	1.380	0.053	2
1,180	1,130	MID. EAST TOWERS	17.2	0.00	12	2646	3003	1.13	1.16	1.12	1.13	-	1.135	0.052	4
4,550	4,280	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	10.4	1.92	3	250	1048	4.30	4.31	4.17	4.18	-0.1	4.192	0.071	4
1,960	1,920	SARMA EDUCATION	16.3	0.00	20	14621	13819	1.95	1.96	1.94	1.96	-0.01	1.952	0.325	5
1,770	1,550	UNIFIED CO.	6.7	7.24	25	7350	11307	1.55	1.55	1.52	1.52	-0.03	1.538	0.147	4
1,690	1,680	UNION LABOR DEV.	-	0.00	7	3450	2223	1.66	1.65	1.63	1.65	-0.01	1.646	0.069	3
SERVICES SECTOR															
1,140	1,100	ATLANTEES	-	0.00	3	10426	11450	1.10	1.10	1.08	1.10	-	1.099	0.372	2
2,040	2,720	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	18.4	4.03	106	109955	299858	2.77	2.76	2.71	2.73	-0.04	2.727	1.187	5
1,350	1,320	JOR. PROGRESSIVE ALMES	8.9	1.13	5	312	1007	3.32	3.30	3.20	3.20	-0.12	3.228	0.081	3
6,350	5,480	JARNA POLYMER CO.	14.0	0.00	12	28251	166451	5.78	6.00	5.70	5.75	-0.25	5.871	0.034	4
11,000	10,400	JOR. PETRO. REFINERY	10.3	8.35	33	7801	83575	10.60	11.00	10.55	10.65	-0.05	10.713	1.122	4
5,500	5,450	JORDAN TANNING	8.9	7.21	1	100	555	5.50	5.55	5.55	5.55	-0.05	5.550	0.001	1
1,290	1,170	MOOLEN INDUSTRIES	10.4	8.33	5	780	934	1.17	1.20	1.19	1.20	-0.03	1.197	0.078	2
1,300	1,100	INDUSTRIAL COM. AG.	-	0.00	77	37800	47993	1.27	1.34	1.21	1.29	-0.02	1.269	0.756	5
6,500	6,320	JOR. MORTERO KILLS	9.16	3.16	1	7500	47400	6.32	6.32	6.32	6.32	-	6.320	0.188	1
8,700	5,080	ARAB CRAN. MANT.	14.2	3.89	142	66363	330825	5.08	5.13	5.04	5.14	-0.06	5.106	0.737	5
2,8100	2,400	JOR. CEMRAC IND.	4.1	5.00	1	200	400	2.40	2.10	2.00	2.00	-0.10	2.000	0.004	1
1,880	2,880	JORDAN BAKRY	6.1	10.14	3	173	481	2.88	2.88	2.74	2.74	-0.14	2.780	0.101	2
2,270	1,300	JOR. PAPER MANUFACT.	14.6	6.46	13	2246	2246	1.23	1.25	1.21	1.24	-0.01	1.237	0.073	4
2,070	1,870	GEMERAL KERING	122.7	4.00	4	550	978	1.97	1.87	1.70	1.75	-0.22	1.778	0.055	4
7,700	7,600	ARAB CHEM. INDUSTR.	22.5	4.09	2	66	484	7.70	7.33	7.33	7.33	-0.37	7.333	0.101	1
6,300	6,000	DAR ALKAMA. DIV. INV.	6.9	6.34	25	17490	102786	6.15	6.00	5.70	5.70	-0.45	5.877	0.292	4
8,980	2,700	ARAB ALUM. IND.	6.6	8.90	5	1800	3637	2.83	2.83	2.77	2.81	-0.04	2.798	0.022	4
1,520	1,470	LIVERPOOL & POLYEST.	11.6	0.00	61	58450	28144	1.48	1.50	1.47	1.48	-0.01	1.482	0.271	4
620	730	ARAB PAPER CORP. TRD.	21.4	0.00	3	1500	1058	0.73	0.71	0.70	0.70	-0.03	0.705	0.041	3
700	610	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	-	0.00	2	1000	605	0.61	0.61	0.60	0.60	-0.01	0.605	0.025	1
580	540	INTERNATIONAL	-	0.00	20	21680	11834	0.59	0.56	0.54	0.55	-	0.546	0.361	5
460	410	INTERNATIONAL PETRO. CHEM.	0.00	0.00	71	82750	37260	0.41	0.41	0.40	0.40	-0.01	0.402	0.319	5
600	520	JOR. ROCKWELL IND.	315.2	0.00	8	4232	3215	0.53	0.53	0.52	0.53	-	0.523	0.141	2
1,260	1,130	NAEL. CABLE WIRE. KIFAC	27.2	0.00	23	12334	13713	1.17	1.14	1.12	1.13	-0.04	1.130	0.162	5
660	590	JOR. SULPHO-CEM.	-	0.00	110	157775	90910	0.59	0.59	0.56	0.58	-0.01	0.576	0.503	5
1,470	1,110	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	16.7	5.34	52	40778	52446	1.33	1.39	1.29	1.31	-0.02	1.307	0.806	5
540	500	KANTHER INVEST.	10.0	0.00	10	14350	7177	0.50	0.53	0.47	0.51	-0.03	0.516	0.718	3
1,100	1,000	UNIV. MOON. INDUS.	15.5	6.19	131	73641	73226	1.01	1.06	0.97	0.97	-0.04	0.994	1.227	5
840	770	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	10.1	13.33	31	18962	16245	0.77	0.79	0.74	0.75	-0.02	0.751	0.237	5
1,540	1,460	NAEL. CHEMISTE	13.8	4.79	22	25310	37064	1.46	1.48	1.46	1.46	-	1.464	0.352	4
1,370	1,300	NEW CABLE CO.	13.7	0.00	127	165414	170692	1.03	1.05	1.00	1.02	-0.01	1.032	2.068	5
1,470	1,370	EX-ANAL BEAR WEAR	12.0	0.00	15	12750	16878	1.34	1.35	1.30	1.34	-0.01	1.324	0.704	3
1,230	1,170	INTEL. TORONCO	6.5	0.00	18	7330	8406	1.18	1.18	1.17	1.18	-	1.177	0.073	4
1,170	1,010	UNION CH. & VER.	46.8	0.00	34	40014	40621	1.02	1.03	1.01	1.03	-0.01	1.015	0.889	5
950	780	JORDAN STEEL	9.3	8.43	161	37123	267489	0.82	0.86	0.81	0.83	-0.01	0.844	2.114	5
740	660	MID. EAST COMPLEX	7.16	16.13	16	9350	57467	0.68	0.68	0.61	0.62	-0.02	0.623	0.042	4
1,000	1,000	ARAB INTL. FOOD FACT.	54.9	0.00	3	4821	4821	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	-	1.000	0.000	2
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR															
1,334	1370261					1995078							108.71		1.245
GRAND TOTAL															
1989	2980254					4296484							166.38		1.022
PARALLEL MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (28/03/1998 - 01/04/1998)															
WEEKLY REPORT															
DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS		COMPANY NAME	P/E	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE PRICE	TURNOVER	NO. OF TRADING DAYS
HIGH	LOW														
980	910	EXPORT & FIN. INC. 75%	17.2	0.00	6	15650	10894	0.93	0.95	0.93	0.93	-	0.936	0.078	2
1,050	1,050	JOR. POLYEST. TRADING CO	6666.7	0.00	3	2450	2645	1.09	1.10	1.05	1.10	-0.05	1.080	0.082	2
1,050	1,050	JOR. POLYEST. TRADING CO	2.6	2.75	1	100	100	1.05	1.00	1.00	1.00	-0.05	1.000	0.001	1
1,000	1,000	JOR. TRADE FACT.	-	0.00	69	494300	193777	0.39	0.40	0.39	0.39	-	0.392	17.169	4
700	600	NAEL. CONCRE. CHEMISTS	-	0.00	5	675	168005	0.48	0.50	0.42	0.43	-0.05	0.446	0.371	5
490	430	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	-	0.00	99	527431	127039	0.74	0.75	0.74	0.75	-0.01	0.741	2.397	4
740	730	UNION DEV. CO.	-	0.00	31	45407	19616	0.69	0.67	0.67	0.67	-0.02	0.672	0.324	4
740	470	AL-BANILYAT	8	2.50	31	45407	23998	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	-	1.000	0.167	3
1,800	940	AL-SHARQ INV. CO.	352.1	0.00	10	32999	23998	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	-	0.690	0.1250	1
1,220	1,220	SPECIALIZED JOR. 75%	78.9	0.00	25	280000	559750	2.00	2.00	1.95	2.00	-	1.999	3.889	4
2,000	2,000	CENTURY JOR. GROUP	-	0.00	12	77096	36220	0.48	0.47	0.44	0.47	-0.01	0.470	2.203	4
510	460	ARAB FOOD & MED.	-	0.00	63	130392	48339	0.38	0.38	0.34	0.38	-	0.371	2.004	3
380	300	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	43.8	0.00	7	88350	12323	1.15	1.15	1.13	1.14	-0.02	1.138	0.197	5
150	120	JOR. INDUS. MACHIN- JEMCO	-	0.00	7	800	1373	0.33	0.35						



Pat Rafter

Black beats Rafter to level Davis Cup tie

MILDURA (AFP) — Byron Black blunted Patrick Rafter's powerful serve to put newcomers Zimbabwe level with Australia after the opening set of the Davis Cup World Group first round tennis tie here Friday.

Black fought back from losing the opening set to down the U.S. Open champion Rafter, 3-6, 6-3, 6-2, 7-6 (7/0) in two hours 26 minutes.

His victory kept Zimbabwe in the tie after his younger brother Wayne lost a three hour 18 minute struggle to Jason Stoltenberg, 6-3, 6-4, 5-7, 7-5 in the opening singles.

The elder Black, rated 81 in the world, displayed great tenacity and exceptional returns of service to claw back after World No. 4 Rafter had breezed through the opening four games on his way to taking the first set.

But Rafter, troubled by a virus in the lead-up to the tie, gradually lost steam against the gritty Black, who will team with his brother Wayne to face the champion Woodies, Mark Woodforde and Todd Woodbridge, in Saturday's doubles rubber.

"I knew I had to return well against Pat's big serve and I did it well today," said Byron Black. "We didn't expect to be level with Australia after the first day and we have to come out and do our best against the Woodies tomorrow."

"Wayne and I play well together in the doubles in

Davis Cup." Black had a few nervous moments late in the fourth set as Rafter tried to feed off the cheering home crowd and rally his game.

Rafter was down a break at 4-3, but broke back in the next game to 4-4 and got to within two points of the tie at 40-30 on Black's service in the 10th game, before the Zimbabwean took the set into a tiebreaker.

Black finished with a flourish reeling off the tiebreaker to love to give the small Zimbabwean contingent in the stands hope of pulling off a boilover result over the next two days in their first tie in the World Group.

Byron Black took his Davis Cup singles record to 31-11 while Rafter has surprisingly lost more singles matches than he's won at 6-7 in the cup competition. Rafter had beaten Black in their only previous encounter in three sets in the quarter-finals at Philadelphia last year.

Earlier, Stoltenberg was extended to five match points before giving Australia the opening singles rubber.

Stoltenberg, who turns 28 on Saturday, toiled for over three hours to extinguish the gutsy Wayne Black, 6-3, 6-4, 5-7, 7-5.

Stoltenberg, ranked 39 in the world, had a chance to close the match out in straight sets but could not convert a match point at 5-4 enabling 24-year-old Black to break back and eventually take the rubber into a fourth set.

Cheered on by a sell-out crowd in this rural city, an hour's flight north of Melbourne, Stoltenberg had a break to lead 2-0 in the fourth set but Black broke back to level at 3-3 when the Australian double-faulted.

The breakthrough came in the 11th game when world No. 69 Black was down break point and Stoltenberg rifled a backhand winner cross court to take a 6-5 lead.

Stoltenberg had nervous moments in the last game, frequently calling for a towel from captain John Newcombe at court-side as he attempted to serve out for the match.

Stoltenberg had three more match points but each time Black fought them off until on the fifth match point he had a backhand winner to clinch the rubber much to the relief of the Australian team and supporters.

The victory took Stoltenberg's singles record in Davis Cup to 7-4 in his fourth year playing for his country, Black was 15-10.

It was the first meeting between the two players. "I've never had so much trouble closing out a match," Stoltenberg said afterwards. "The occasion of playing Davis Cup got to me early, but I'm glad to have put us one-up."

Australian coach Tony Roche said: "Wayne stuck in there and put a lot of pressure on Stoltenberg's serve. Their (brothers Byron and Wayne Black) strength is their return of serve."

Stoltenberg said: "I was just a little bit nervous in the 11th game, but I knew I had to win it and I did."

Shearer ready to strike

NEWCASTLE (AFP) — Newcastle and England striker Alan Shearer is convinced Sunday's FA Cup semi-final match against Sheffield United will see an end to his goal drought.

Shearer is convinced he is back to full fitness after his serious pre-season ankle injury and is ready to strike.

"I feel great and have done for a few weeks now. I feel fit. I feel confident and I feel good," said Shearer, who has scored just one Premiership goal in ten matches but four in the FA Cup campaign.

"It is up to other people to judge me, they always have done, and will continue to do so but the most important thing is I feel fit and I feel confident and am really looking forward to the game."

Shearer, who was only four the last time United made it to FA Cup final, is well aware of the weight of expectancy which will be carried over the Pennines by 25,000 Geordies travelling to Old Trafford.

The striker admitted: "It is an exciting situation, it will be great to play in. It is the furthest I've ever got in the competition which is probably the case for most of the lads but it is something we're all looking forward to."

"I'm determined to enjoy it on the day, as will our fans, but let's hope we can get the right result so we can have a good time after the game."

"No way will we write Sheffield United off, they are there because they deserve to be there, and they will get the same respect as any other team gets before we play them. They have done well, have got some good players — it will be a tough game."

"It is just a co-incidence that four of my goals have come in FA Cup games let's hope there are one or two more on Sunday."

"Now that the game is here it is a massive game for everyone concerned with the club. We've done extremely well to get where we are it would be a shame to fall at the final hurdle."

Shearer insisted his side's poor Premiership position had not put extra pressure on them to succeed on Sunday.

"The only pressure is because of the size of this football club, but there is no more pressure in this game than in any other," he said.

"We'll go out with the right attitude to try and win the game and if not win it then not get beat."

"All I know is that the fans up here have been starved of success for a long time, and that is in our minds."

"And it is that which we are looking to change on Sunday. We've got a tremendous chance of winning silverware this year but have two obstacles to overcome first."

"But if any set of fans deserve success then it is this lot up here. If we go on and win it then it will be special for us at the club."

Broncos host Pats in first week of 1998 NFL season

NEW YORK (AFP) — The Super Bowl champion Denver Broncos host the New England Patriots on Monday night and 10 division matchups highlight the first weekend of the 1998 National Football League season.

The 240-game regular season will begin on Sunday, September 6 and conclude on the weekend of December 26-28.

The playoffs begin with wild card weekend on Saturday and Sunday, January 2-3 1999. The divisional playoffs will be held the following weekend.

The American Conference and National Conference Championship games will be played on Sunday, January 17. Super Bowl 33 will be held January 31 at Miami.

The opener against New England is the first of three showcase Monday night appearances for the Broncos, who beat the Green Bay Packers, 31-24, in Super Bowl 32 last January. Denver will also play AFC West rival Kansas City on Monday, November 16, and the Miami Dolphins on Monday, December 21.

The matchup with the Dolphins features the NFL's two all-time passing yardage leaders, Miami's Dan Marino (55,416 yards) and John Elway of the Broncos (48,669).

The regular season will be played over 17 weekends, with each team receiving a bye week as part of its 16-game schedule. Byes will occur during weeks three through nine.

City on Monday, November 16, and the Miami Dolphins on Monday, December 21.

The matchup with the Dolphins features the NFL's two all-time passing yardage leaders, Miami's Dan Marino (55,416 yards) and John Elway of the Broncos (48,669).

The regular season will be played over 17 weekends, with each team receiving a bye week as part of its 16-game schedule. Byes will occur during weeks three through nine.

City on Monday, November 16, and the Miami Dolphins on Monday, December 21.

The matchup with the Dolphins features the NFL's two all-time passing yardage leaders, Miami's Dan Marino (55,416 yards) and John Elway of the Broncos (48,669).

The regular season will be played over 17 weekends, with each team receiving a bye week as part of its 16-game schedule. Byes will occur during weeks three through nine.

The playoffs begin with wild card weekend on Saturday and Sunday, January 2-3 1999. The divisional playoffs will be held the following weekend.

The American Conference and National Conference Championship games will be played on Sunday, January 17. Super Bowl 33 will be held January 31 at Miami.

The opener against New England is the first of three showcase Monday night appearances for the Broncos, who beat the Green Bay Packers, 31-24, in Super Bowl 32 last January. Denver will also play AFC West rival Kansas City on Monday, November 16, and the Miami Dolphins on Monday, December 21.

The matchup with the Dolphins features the NFL's two all-time passing yardage leaders, Miami's Dan Marino (55,416 yards) and John Elway of the Broncos (48,669).

The regular season will be played over 17 weekends, with each team receiving a bye week as part of its 16-game schedule. Byes will occur during weeks three through nine.

The playoffs begin with wild card weekend on Saturday and Sunday, January 2-3 1999. The divisional playoffs will be held the following weekend.

The American Conference and National Conference Championship games will be played on Sunday, January 17. Super Bowl 33 will be held January 31 at Miami.

The opener against New England is the first of three showcase Monday night appearances for the Broncos, who beat the Green Bay Packers, 31-24, in Super Bowl 32 last January. Denver will also play AFC West rival Kansas City on Monday, November 16, and the Miami Dolphins on Monday, December 21.

The matchup with the Dolphins features the NFL's two all-time passing yardage leaders, Miami's Dan Marino (55,416 yards) and John Elway of the Broncos (48,669).

The regular season will be played over 17 weekends, with each team receiving a bye week as part of its 16-game schedule. Byes will occur during weeks three through nine.

The playoffs begin with wild card weekend on Saturday and Sunday, January 2-3 1999. The divisional playoffs will be held the following weekend.

The American Conference and National Conference Championship games will be played on Sunday, January 17. Super Bowl 33 will be held January 31 at Miami.

The opener against New England is the first of three showcase Monday night appearances for the Broncos, who beat the Green Bay Packers, 31-24, in Super Bowl 32 last January. Denver will also play AFC West rival Kansas City on Monday, November 16, and the Miami Dolphins on Monday, December 21.

The matchup with the Dolphins features the NFL's two all-time passing yardage leaders, Miami's Dan Marino (55,416 yards) and John Elway of the Broncos (48,669).

The regular season will be played over 17 weekends, with each team receiving a bye week as part of its 16-game schedule. Byes will occur during weeks three through nine.

The playoffs begin with wild card weekend on Saturday and Sunday, January 2-3 1999. The divisional playoffs will be held the following weekend.

The American Conference and National Conference Championship games will be played on Sunday, January 17. Super Bowl 33 will be held January 31 at Miami.

The opener against New England is the first of three showcase Monday night appearances for the Broncos, who beat the Green Bay Packers, 31-24, in Super Bowl 32 last January. Denver will also play AFC West rival Kansas City on Monday, November 16, and the Miami Dolphins on Monday, December 21.

The matchup with the Dolphins features the NFL's two all-time passing yardage leaders, Miami's Dan Marino (55,416 yards) and John Elway of the Broncos (48,669).

The regular season will be played over 17 weekends, with each team receiving a bye week as part of its 16-game schedule. Byes will occur during weeks three through nine.

The playoffs begin with wild card weekend on Saturday and Sunday, January 2-3 1999. The divisional playoffs will be held the following weekend.

The American Conference and National Conference Championship games will be played on Sunday, January 17. Super Bowl 33 will be held January 31 at Miami.

The opener against New England is the first of three showcase Monday night appearances for the Broncos, who beat the Green Bay Packers, 31-24, in Super Bowl 32 last January. Denver will also play AFC West rival Kansas City on Monday, November 16, and the Miami Dolphins on Monday, December 21.

The matchup with the Dolphins features the NFL's two all-time passing yardage leaders, Miami's Dan Marino (55,416 yards) and John Elway of the Broncos (48,669).

The regular season will be played over 17 weekends, with each team receiving a bye week as part of its 16-game schedule. Byes will occur during weeks three through nine.

Wembley sold for £103 million

LONDON (AFP) — The future of Wembley Stadium was finally settled on Thursday after the owners, Wembley plc, agreed to sell the venue to the English National Stadium Trust (ENST) for £103 million (\$170 million) in cash.

The deal follows months of speculation about the future of Britain's most famous sporting venue in which ENST found itself lined up against Arsenal FC for ownership of the site.

The ENST plans to spend a further 140 million renovating the stadium in time for England's bid to host the 2006 World Cup. Building work on the stadium, which opened in 1923, is expected to begin straight after next year's FA Cup final. The trust had been expected to clinch the Wembley deal for the last week after rival bidders Arsenal called off its acquisition plan.

Arsenal, which had also bid around 100 million for the famous stadium, is now expected to press ahead with plans to renovate its own Highbury stadium.

Sampras sidelined by shoulder injury

HONG KONG (AFP) — Pete Sampras, ousted this week as World No. 1, has pulled out of next week's Hong Kong Open because of a mystery shoulder injury.

Organisers said Friday that Sampras had only just told them about the injury incurred at the Lipton Championships in Florida last month. "We are shocked," said one official.

Sampras lost his world number one ranking after 102 weeks when he was beaten in the third round of the Lipton event, but made no mention then of the injury. A slump in form has seen him beaten four times in 19 matches this year.

A spokesman for the Hong Kong Open organisers said Sampras had been advised by doctors to stop playing and was undergoing therapy.

The withdrawal deprives Sampras of a prime chance to take the number one spot back from Marcelo Rios of Chile, who beat Andre Agassi of the United States in the

Lipton final.

Rios is only 45 points ahead in the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) world rankings and Sampras would have gone ahead again by reaching the semi-finals in Hong Kong.

With the clay season now approaching, which favours Rios, Sampras will have a battle on his hands getting back to number one.

Sampras' absence will leave Michael Chang, the world number 11, as the favourite in Hong Kong.

Chang was on a plane to Hong Kong when Sampras pulled out of the event and did not know of the surprise announcement.

But even Chang will be making his comeback after pulling out of the Lipton event because of a knee injury suffered at the start of March. Doubts had been expressed that Chang would start the Hong Kong tournament.

European Cup Winners' Cup

European balance of power swings towards Italy

PARIS (AFP) — Vicenza and VfB Stuttgart won their semi-final first leg European Cup Winners' Cup matches on Thursday as the balance of power swung from Germany's to Italy's favour in Europe this week.

Italy's Vicenza earned a 1-0 home victory over England's Chelsea through Lamberto Zauli and VfB Stuttgart fought back to beat Lokomotiv Moscow 2-1 on German soil.

Jonathan Akpoborie of Nigeria and Fredi Bobic scored for Stuttgart after Lokomotiv's Zaza Djanachia opened the scoring.

With Lazio and Inter Milan winning their UEFA Cup semi-final first legs, Juventus beating Monaco in the European Cup, and now Vicenza winning, Italy have four possible finalists in Europe.

Germany, who won both the European Cup through Dortmund and UEFA Cup through Schalke 04 last season to become the most successful nation in Europe, only have VfB Stuttgart as likely finalists.

Gianluca Vialli's side failed to make any impression on Vicenza's defence and were lucky not to lose by a bigger margin as Zauli and Pasquale Luiso carved their way through the Blues' back four.

Zauli gave Ed De Goey a fright in the 15th minute with a near-post header which the Chelsea goalkeeper did well to palm away.

But the tall Italian playmaker gave the Dutchman an even bigger fright three minutes later when he muscled his way into the left side of the Chelsea area and smacked a low shot in the right hand corner of the net.

It could have been 2-0 to the home side in the 24th



Jonathan Akpoborie of VfB Stuttgart (L) shoots for the goal against keeper Ruslan Nigmatullin and Evgeni Khariachev (C) of Lokomotiv Moscow during their first semi-final European Cup Winners cup match in Stuttgart (Reuters photo)

minute, when Vialli gave away possession just outside the Vicenza area and Gabriele Ambrosini sprinted the length of the pitch before succumbing to Michael Duberry's challenge.

Ambrosini followed up barely a minute later with a free-kick into the Chelsea area which needed two desperate clearances, while Marco Schenardi was the next to test the Chelsea defence.

In the second half, Chelsea were improving with the arrival of Norwegian striker Tore Andre Flo on the right flank, but the high ball into the area remained virtually the only attacking manoeuvre.

Frank Leboeuf cannoned a long shot straight at Pierluigi Brivio in the 76th minute, as Chelsea tried without success to breach Vicenza's defence. They failed, and now have 90 minutes to manage the feat.

A Bobic goal four minutes into injury time salvaged a 2-1 win for Stuttgart against outsiders Lokomotiv Moscow but the Germans will need to work much harder in the return if they are to reach the final of the Cup Winners' Cup.

The Russians surprised the hosts in the 23rd minute when Lokomotiv's Zaza Djanachia received a cross on the edge of the area.

He held defender Martin Sparring at bay before spinning and shooting home. Lokomotiv's early strike set them up with the all-important away goal, but thereafter they had few shots on goal as they sat back to defend their lead.

The Germans looked dangerous when they finally adopted the wide tactic and it led to their equaliser after 28 minutes, a header by Akpoborie.

Lokomotiv defended grimly in the second half and effectively stifled the

contest. But seconds from the end and as many of the 14,500 crowd slowly filed out of the ground, Stuttgart made the breakthrough.

Substitute Kristian Liszes dodged a tackle near the corner post and popped a pass through to Bobic, who managed to slide the ball home as he stumbled under a challenge.

"It was really very important for us that we scored that last goal," said a relieved Stuttgart coach Joachim Loew.

"I hope it gives us added confidence for coming matches. This is of course a good result for us," added Loew.

It may well have saved his job, which has been in jeopardy because of the team's recent poor form. But the second leg will see his side treading a fine line between success and failure with the tie nicely poised.

Ginola back in Jacquet's World Cup thoughts

LONDON (AFP) — Out-of-favour winger David Ginola could make a surprise return to the France squad for this summer's World Cup Finals, Tottenham boss Christian Gross revealed Thursday.

Gross contacted French coach Aime Jacquet to urge him not to ignore the in-form Spurs star — and was told

there was a chance of Ginola making the final 22. Ginola had virtually written off his chances of being selected after years in the international wilderness, and has even signed up with the BBC to be part of their World Cup commentary team.

"I called Jacquet after France's recent friendly with

Norway in Marseille and told him how well David was playing for us," said Gross.

"His response was very positive. He told me he was keeping an eye on David and that he did have a small chance of making the French squad for the finals." Ginola has been Tottenham's best player this season, despite

the team's perilous position near the foot of the Premiership.

The Frenchman missed last week's win at Crystal Palace through suspension, but returns to the team for the visit of Everton to White Hart Lane on Saturday for a real relegation six-pointer.

TODAY AT	PHILADELPHIA 1 Sylvester Stallone ... in DAYLIGHT Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	PHILADELPHIA 2 MAJOR PAYNE Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	PLAZA The biggest cinema production TITANIC Shows: 12:00, 3:00, 7:00, 10:30 p.m.	CONCORD Kim Basinger... in L.A. CONFIDENTIAL Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:45 Adel Imam & Yusra ... in RISALA ILA AL WALI (ARABIC) Shows: 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	GALLERIA 2 ABDOUN GRAND OPENING TITANIC Shows: 5:15, 8:30 The film is also on at 2:00 p.m. & 12:00 a.m. on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays	GALLERIA 1 ABDOUN GRAND OPENING TITANIC Shows: 3:30, 7:00, 10:30 The film is also on at 12:00 a.m. on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays	Hisham Yous Theatres TEL: 4625155 STARTING APRIL 6TH Don't Laugh Please We're Jordanian Starring Hisham Yous, Amal Dabbas, Rania Kurdi and the group at 8:30 p.m. For reservations call: 4640155, 4625155
	<p>Each Theatre has its own programme of films and shows. For more information, please contact the respective cinema or theatre.</p>						

SCOREBOARD

Team	Score	Team	Score
New York Yankees	1-0	Los Angeles Angels	0-1
San Francisco Giants	2-1	St. Louis Cardinals	1-2
Chicago Cubs	3-2	Philadelphia Phillies	0-3
Atlanta Braves	4-1	San Diego Padres	1-0
Florida Marlins	5-0	Colorado Rockies	2-1
Miami Marlins	6-1	Arizona Diamondbacks	3-2
San Jose Giants	7-0	San Francisco Giants	8-1
San Francisco Giants	9-0	San Francisco Giants	10-0

Circle Cup

Team	Score	Team	Score
San Jose Giants	1-0	San Jose Giants	2-1
San Jose Giants	3-2	San Jose Giants	4-1
San Jose Giants	5-0	San Jose Giants	6-1
San Jose Giants	7-0	San Jose Giants	8-1
San Jose Giants	9-0	San Jose Giants	10-0

Group 2

Team	Score	Team	Score
San Jose Giants	1-0	San Jose Giants	2-1
San Jose Giants	3-2	San Jose Giants	4-1
San Jose Giants	5-0	San Jose Giants	6-1
San Jose Giants	7-0	San Jose Giants	8-1
San Jose Giants	9-0	San Jose Giants	10-0

GOREN BRIDGE

Team	Score	Team	Score
San Jose Giants	1-0	San Jose Giants	2-1
San Jose Giants	3-2	San Jose Giants	4-1
San Jose Giants	5-0	San Jose Giants	6-1
San Jose Giants	7-0	San Jose Giants	8-1
San Jose Giants	9-0	San Jose Giants	10-0

In defiance of Palestinians

Israel plans military parade in Jerusalem

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel plans a military parade with thousands of soldiers and dozens of armoured vehicles in occupied Jerusalem next month to celebrate the occupation of the city's eastern sector by Israel in the 1967 Mideast war, an official said Friday.

The parade, held in the context of Israel's 50th anniversary celebrations, would be the biggest military show of force in the disputed city in decades, and is expected to anger the Palestinians who claim the eastern sector as a future capital.

The parade will start out on the outskirts of Arab east Jerusalem — at the Jaffa Gate of the walled Old City — and pass a reviewing stand outside City Hall before reaching western

Jerusalem. The senior Palestinian official in the city, Faisal Husseini, said he considered the march unnecessary. "If they stay on the western part of the 1967 border — that is their business. But, if they march in east Jerusalem, we will certainly see this as a provocation," Mr. Husseini told the Associated Press (AP).

The parade will take place on May 24, or Jerusalem Day, the Hebrew calendar anniversary of Israel's occupation of Arab east Jerusalem in the 1967 Mideast war.

An Israeli official who spoke on condition of anonymity said between 10,000 and 15,000 soldiers would march, in addition to an equal number of civilians. An air show would take place at the same time,

involving helicopters and possibly planes.

In the first stretch, soldiers will march in step, with each unit led by a humvee, or armoured-plated utility vehicle. Dozens of armoured vehicles would be in the parade, the official said.

Jerusalem city spokesman Hagai Elias would not discuss the parade plans provided the Israeli official.

Mr. Elias said that despite the planned participation of soldiers, the march was not primarily a military since civilian groups would also join in.

"We have a Jerusalem Day parade every year — and this is no exception. And more importantly, Israel does not authorise military parades in Jerusalem and again, this is no exception," said Mr. Elias.

'Israel to resume Jabal Abu Ghneim building after pullback decision'

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel will begin construction of units at a new Jewish settlement in Arab east Jerusalem once a deal is reached with the Palestinians over a West Bank troop withdrawal, a rightwing deputy said Friday.

"I have the clear impression that the government does not want to provoke the Americans by authorising house construction before a decision is made on the redeployment," MK Ruby Rivlin told AFP.

"But once a decision is

taken, the work will begin even before the redeployment is fully implemented," said Ms. Rivlin, a deputy from the ruling Likud Party of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Mr. Netanyahu's government has repeatedly denied claims by his right wing that it has frozen building at Jabal Abu Ghneim, known as Har Homa to Jews, on the southern edge of Jerusalem, under pressure from the United States.

It has said that "technical rea-

sons" were behind the delay in the start of unit building, after infrastructure was completed late last year on the hill.

The groundbreaking of work at Jabal Abu Ghneim in March 1997 threw the peace process into crisis and the deadlock has endured since.

Washington has urged Mr. Netanyahu to call a halt to settlement construction and has tried to mediate a deal over Israel's promised troop pullback from the West Bank in a bid to revive the peace process.

Israel no longer insists on Syrian pullout from Lebanon — Mordechai

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai stated here Thursday that Israel no longer insisted on a Syrian military withdrawal from Lebanon as a condition for an agreement to evacuate south Lebanon.

"We understand the Syrian interests in Lebanon and we will not demand a withdrawal of their troops from this country" in exchange for an Israeli military withdrawal from south Lebanon, Mr. Mordechai

said at a public meeting near Tel Aviv.

He said Israel only wanted a "security agreement" with Lebanon before withdrawing its forces, and not a "peace treaty."

On Wednesday, Israeli ministers approved a plan for a conditional withdrawal from south Lebanon.

"Israel is accepting Resolution 425 so that the Israeli Defence Forces will leave Lebanon with appropri-

ate security arrangements," the security cabinet said in a statement after its vote.

It said those arrangements involved Beirut restoring "its effective control over southern Lebanon and assuming responsibility for guaranteeing that its territory not be used as a base for terrorist activity against Israel."

However, Beirut and Damascus, which has 35,000 men in Lebanon, turned down the conditions put by Israel.

Pollard rejects partial recognition by Israel that he was its spy

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A former U.S. Navy analyst jailed for spying for Israel repeated demands that Israel admit he worked for the Jewish state, rejecting a halfway offer to paint him as a rogue agent, his lawyers said Friday.

Jonathan Pollard rejected as "bogus" the government offer to recognise that he worked as an agent for Israel but was operating without orders when he handed over U.S. military secrets to the Jewish state, the lawyers said.

"I am not rotting in jail for a thirteen year in order to justify a lie. The truth must be told," Pollard told his lawyers, the Israeli daily Haaretz reported.

"The truth is that I was an Israeli agent who was working for an arm of intelligence created by the Israeli government. Anything else is a distortion and a stumbling block in

attaining my freedom," he said.

Pollard, who passed on to Israel classified data while working as a navy analyst, notably concerning military developments in the Arab World, has pressed Israel to admit he was its spy in a bid to help win his release from prison.

He has appealed to the Israeli Supreme Court over the matter and a response is expected within the next few weeks.

Israeli ministers have pressed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to outright recognise Pollard as a spy, something Israeli leaders have refused to do since the 1980s for fear of angering the United States.

The compromise formula was put forward by Mr. Netanyahu's legal adviser, Shimon Stein.

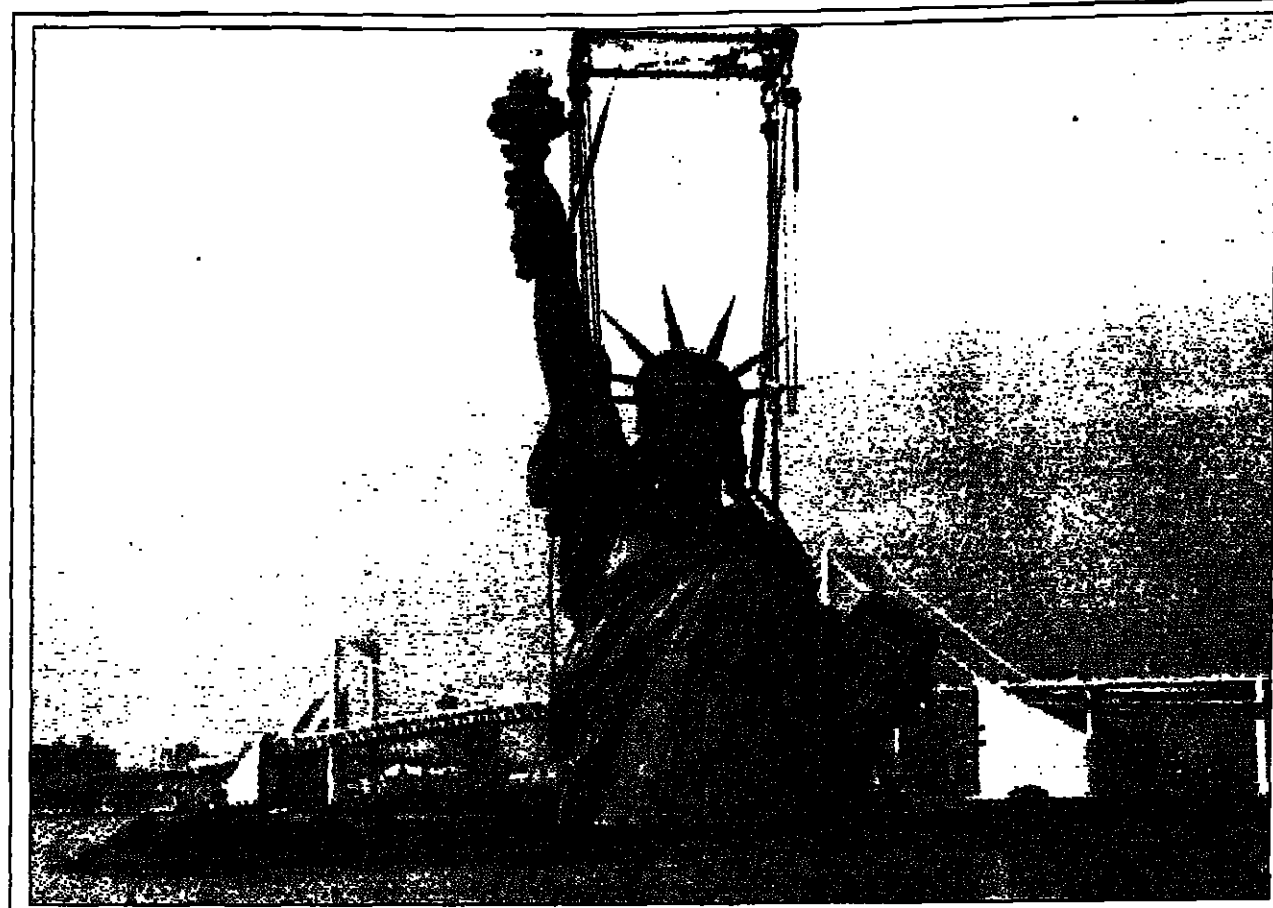
Pollard was recruited by a

special intelligence unit referred to as the "scientific liaison office," which operated independently of the Mossad spy service but was headed by a former Mossad official.

He was recruited in violation of a rule that agents should not be selected from a friendly country's Jewish community. Pollard had volunteered his services.

When Pollard realised that his role had been discovered and the Federal Bureau of Intelligence (FBI) was after him, he and his wife fled to the Israeli embassy in Washington, but the staff refused to let them in or acknowledge their role on behalf of the Jewish state.

Pollard was arrested in 1985 and sentenced to life in prison for treason in 1987. He obtained Israeli nationality in 1996.



2ND STATUE OF LIBERTY ARRIVES IN TOKYO: A scale model of the Statue of Liberty is lifted from a container Friday after its arrival at Tokyo's Oi pier from Paris. The scale model statue was divided into six pieces for the month-long trip from France. The statue was designed by French sculptor Frederic-Auguste Bartholdi and given to the United States by France. The statue will be reassembled for display at Odaiba Beach Park on Tokyo Bay as part of a French cultural festival commemorating the friendship of the two capitals (Reuters photo)

33 killed in bus accident in India

BHOPAL (AP) — A bus carrying Hindu pilgrims fell into a gorge in central India Friday, killing 33 people and injuring 16 others, police said.

The passengers were travelling from Bhopal, the capital of the central Madhya Pradesh state, to a neighbouring pilgrimage spot to take part in a nine-day-long religious festival.

Police said the bus driver lost control of the bus which fell into a five-foot deep pit. The accident took place near a popular picnic spot.

Survivors said that just before the accident happened, the driver of the bus announced the brakes were not working.

Police said 23 victims died on the spot while 10 died on the way to the hospital. The dead included 26 children and five women, police said. There were 60 people on the bus.

Turkey allows one party to collect sheepskin

ANKARA (AP) — Trying to cut off a source of big income for Islamist institutions, the government has ordered a crackdown on illegal collection of sheepskins during ritual sacrifice.

Justice Minister Oltan Sungurlu said Friday. By law, the only authorised collector is an association founded by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the father of Turkey's secular system.

The group shares the proceeds from sale of the skins with the state-run Religious Affairs Board and some other government-approved foundations.

But in recent years, Islamist groups have been illegally collecting the skins, whose overall sale brings in about \$4 million.

Muslims usually slaughter sheep, cows and camels as a ritual to commemorate the slaughter of a ram by the biblical Abraham. The slaughter coincides with the closing days of the annual pilgrimage to Islam's holy site of Mecca.

While in 1990, a panic in the crowds killed 1,426 pilgrims. Tragedy also struck during last year's Hajj when a fire killed 343 people in a pilgrims' camp on the Mina plain south of Mecca.

Lightly armed police were visible around the Great Mosque and in surrounding areas, along with ambulances.

The security services are expected to closely watch the road from Mecca, the birthplace of Mohammad, to Mina, some 10 kilometres to the north on Sunday, when some two million pilgrims move down it in the first leg of the mass journey of faith.

On Monday at dawn, the pilgrims will begin to climb Mount Arafat, where Mohammad is believed to have received the first verses of the Koran. The ascent of the mount and the recitation of prayers that day mark the high-point of the Hajj.

The pilgrims are due to return to Mina on Monday evening after a series of rituals in the valley of Muzdalifa, near Mount Arafat.

On Tuesday, the first day of the feast of Eid Al Adha, each pilgrim is supposed to ritually sacrifice a sheep, lamb, or camel, to commemorate the sacrifice of Abraham, whom the Koran says was prepared to take the life of his own son to show his obedience to God.

This year, more than 800,000 sheep, cattle, and camels have been prepared for sacrifice and their meat will be distributed, as every

Iran confirms latest POW exchange with Iraq

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran confirmed on Friday it released 800 Iraqi prisoners of war in return for 62 Iranian prisoners taken captive during their 1980-1988 war and said more were to be exchanged on Friday.

A member of Iran's POW commission, identified only as Dr. Khademi, said the prisoners were exchanged late Thursday at Iran's Khosravi border point in Kermanshah province, the official news agency IRNA reported.

Iranian local officials, Iraqi officials and representatives of the International Red Cross were also present.

Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Mahmoud Mohammadi said Friday that Thursday's exchange was part of an agreement to trade 380 Iranian POWs with 5,592 Iraqis.

"As part of agreements between the foreign ministers of Iran and Iraq to settle humanitarian issues between the two sides, the two countries decided to free captives and prisoners whose fate had been resolved in a joint commission," he told IRNA.

Mr. Mohammadi said the two sides will continue with others matter relating to POWs and those missing in

action agreed to in a recent meeting of their joint commission.

Iraq's official news agency INA said on Thursday that 62 Iranian prisoners had been freed by Baghdad in return for 800 by Iran. Iranian radio also put the number of Iraqis freed at 62.

The issue of POWs has been the main stumbling block to a normalisation of relations between Baghdad and Tehran.

According to Iran, at least 5,000 Iraqis are still detained in Iraq, while Iraq has claimed that 20,000 Iraqis are being held in Iran.

U.S.: Citizens should defer travel to Iran

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The U.S. State Department on Thursday urged U.S. citizens to defer travel to Iran, while acknowledging Iranian President Mohammad Khatami's calls for improved relations.

In a statement, the department warned "all U.S. citizens to defer travel to Iran" because "hostility to the United States remains in some segments of the Iranian population and some elements of the Iranian government."

Earlier statements had warned Americans to stay out of Iran altogether, rather than merely postponing travel.

"We have noted some change in attitude in the government in Iran towards the U.S., our new warning reflects this change," a State Department official said on condition of anonymity.

Thursday's statement notes that Mr. Khatami "has called for a 'dialogue of civilisations' and an increase of private exchanges between Iranian and Americans."

"Some limited exchanges have taken place," it adds, an apparent reference to some U.S. wrestlers' participation in a recent tournament in Tehran.

President Khatami, a moderate cleric who was elected in a landslide in May against a conservative rival, has promised greater personal and political freedom as well as the rule of law in line with his vision of an "Islamic civil society."

The State Department regularly issues travel warnings about unstable nations in order to keep U.S. tourists and business executives informed of possible risks. The warnings are updated periodically.

The previous warning regarding Iran came July 8, 1997.

The department justified its caution by saying in its statement that the absence of U.S. diplomatic or consular relations with Iran meant Washington "cannot provide protection or routine consular services to American citizens in Iran."

The Swiss government, acting through its embassy in Tehran, protects U.S. interests in Iran. But the department noted that Tehran generally bans Switzerland from caring for U.S. citizens who also have Iranian nationality.

Washington also emphasised that "U.S. citizens of Iranian origin who are considered to be Iranian citizens have been detained and harassed by Iranian authorities."

Sweden apologises to Iran over egg attack

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Sweden officially apologised Friday for an egg attack on Iranian Culture Minister Ataollah Mohajerani at a UNESCO conference in Stockholm.

Sweden's Foreign Minister Lena Hjelm-Wallen said she regretted Wednesday's incident when an opponent of the Tehran regime threw two eggs at Mr. Mohajerani during his speech to the plenary session of a UNESCO Conference on Cultural Policies for Development.

Iran's Foreign Ministry summoned the Swedish Ambassador Mats Marling

Thursday to vigorously protest the attack, which it attributed to a member of "the terrorist organisation Mujahadeen Khalq."

The Iraq-based organisation is the main armed opposition to the Iranian government.

The ministry told the Swedish diplomat that Iran wanted Stockholm "to punish those involved in this attack."

According to Swedish press reports, Mr. Marling told the Iranian officials that the man would not be sentenced to jail and would only be fined for his attack.

The opponent, whose name was not disclosed, used a

badge of a non-governmental authority to enter the session and was immediately overpowered by police after the attack. As he was dragged out of the room, he shouted: "They killed my brother! They killed my family!"

The director general of the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Federico Mayor, condemned the attack and expressed his wish to "strengthen cooperation with Iran to promote the ideals of justice, liberty, equality, and solidarity defended by UNESCO."



Up close, heart-throb DiCaprio is 'just an ordinary guy'

PARIS (AFP) — Judith Godreche has shared a bed with Hollywood's latest heart-throb Leonardo DiCaprio. On screen. And the verdict? Up close and personal, he's just an ordinary guy. Godreche plays the lover of French King Louis XIV, one of DiCaprio's two characters in "The Man in the Iron Mask" — he also plays the title role. Shooting for the film took place before the epic movie "Titanic" smashed global box-office records, turning DiCaprio from minor star to big-league heart-throb. "He was really nice. And in between takes, we laughed a lot together. When you see a sex symbol so close, he becomes a young man like anyone else," Godreche said in an interview in the French daily France-Soir.

DiCaprio's two characters in "The Man in the Iron Mask" — he also plays the title role. Shooting for the film took place before the epic movie "Titanic" smashed global box-office records, turning DiCaprio from minor star to big-league heart-throb. "He was really nice. And in between takes, we laughed a lot together. When you see a sex symbol so close, he becomes a young man like anyone else," Godreche said in an interview in the French daily France-Soir.

DiCaprio's two characters in "The Man in the Iron Mask" — he also plays the title role. Shooting for the film took place before the epic movie "Titanic" smashed global box-office records, turning DiCaprio from minor star to big-league heart-throb. "He was really nice. And in between takes, we laughed a lot together. When you see a sex symbol so close, he becomes a young man like anyone else," Godreche said in an interview in the French daily France-Soir.

DiCaprio's two characters in "The Man in the Iron Mask" — he also plays the title role. Shooting for the film took place before the epic movie "Titanic" smashed global box-office records, turning DiCaprio from minor star to big-league heart-throb. "He was really nice. And in between takes, we laughed a lot together. When you see a sex symbol so close, he becomes a young man like anyone else," Godreche said in an interview in the French daily France-Soir.

DiCaprio's two characters in "The Man in the Iron Mask" — he also plays the title role. Shooting for the film took place before the epic movie "Titanic" smashed global box-office records, turning DiCaprio from minor star to big-league heart-throb. "He was really nice. And in between takes, we laughed a lot together. When you see a sex symbol so close, he becomes a young man like anyone else," Godreche said in an interview in the French daily France-Soir.

Dylan, Rolling Stones to make joint appearance at Argentina concert

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) — Folk legend Bob Dylan is due to take the stage with the Rolling Stones here next month, as the celebrated rock band continues its mammoth "Bridges to Babylon" tour. The group has included Dylan's 1960s-vintage classic "Like a Rolling Stone," in the show and invited Dylan to share the stage when they perform the song here today, tour promoters announced.

The Stones received a much cooler reception from music critics, who praised the visual and special effects but deemed the show a bit tepid compared to their only previous appearance here in 1995.

The Stones received a much cooler reception from music critics, who praised the visual and special effects but deemed the show a bit tepid compared to their only previous appearance here in 1995.

The Stones received a much cooler reception from music critics, who praised the visual and special effects but deemed the show a bit tepid compared to their only previous appearance here in 1995.

The Stones received a much cooler reception from music critics, who praised the visual and special effects but deemed the show a bit tepid compared to their only previous appearance here in 1995.

Ali at Inoki's final match

TOKYO (AP) — When he was the heavyweight boxing champion 22 years ago, Muhammad Ali fought a bout with a Japanese pro wrestler. On Thursday, he came back to watch wrestler Antonio Inoki's final match. Ali's heavily publicised exhibition "boxing-wrestling" match with Inoki in Tokyo in 1976 was declared a draw. Inoki spent most of the fight in a crab-like position on the mat kicking out at the circling champion's legs. Ali ended up hospitalised for blood clots and muscle damage.

Ali ended up hospitalised for blood clots and muscle damage.

Ali ended up hospitalised for blood clots and muscle damage.

Ali ended up hospitalised for blood clots and muscle damage.

Ali ended up hospitalised for blood clots and muscle damage.

Clapton celebrates 53rd B-day in style

ST. PAUL (AP) — Eric Clapton celebrated his 53rd birthday in style, opening his U.S. tour with a 20-piece orchestra before a sold-out crowd. "This is the best birthday I've had," Clapton told the audience before launching into an encore of "Sunshine of Your Love," from his days with the 1960s power trio Cream. Wearing a long, black coat and white T-shirt, the British blues-rock journeyman ran the gamut from his 1970s classic "Layla," to the Grammy-winning ballad "Tears in Heaven," to songs from his new album, "Pilgrim."

Clapton told the audience before launching into an encore of "Sunshine of Your Love," from his days with the 1960s power trio Cream. Wearing a long, black coat and white T-shirt, the British blues-rock journeyman ran the gamut from his 1970s classic "Layla," to the Grammy-winning ballad "Tears in Heaven," to songs from his new album, "Pilgrim."

Clapton told the audience before launching into an encore of "Sunshine of Your Love," from his days with the 1960s power trio Cream. Wearing a long, black coat and white T-shirt, the British blues-rock journeyman ran the gamut from his 1970s classic "Layla," to the Grammy-winning ballad "Tears in Heaven," to songs from his new album, "Pilgrim."

Clapton told the audience before launching into an encore of "Sunshine of Your Love," from his days with the 1960s power trio Cream. Wearing a long, black coat and white T-shirt, the British blues-rock journeyman ran the gamut from his 1970s classic "Layla," to the Grammy-winning ballad "Tears in Heaven," to songs from his new album, "Pilgrim."

Clapton told the audience before launching into an encore of "Sunshine of Your Love," from his days with the 1960s power trio Cream. Wearing a long, black coat and white T-shirt, the British blues-rock journeyman ran the gamut from his 1970s classic "Layla," to the Grammy-winning ballad "Tears in Heaven," to songs from his new album, "Pilgrim."

Valentino gets presidential medal

ROME (AP) — Italy's president gave a medal Thursday to Italian designer Valentino for his achievements in the fashion industry and for promoting the prestige of "Made in Italy" all over the world. President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro bestowed the honour on the 65-year-old Valentino during a ceremony at the presidential Quirinal Palace. Valentino, whose full name is Valentino Garavani, has mainly showed his designs in Paris in recent years, although his headquarters stay in Rome.

Valentino, whose full name is Valentino Garavani, has mainly showed his designs in Paris in recent years, although his headquarters stay in Rome.

Valentino, whose full name is Valentino Garavani, has mainly showed his designs in Paris in recent years, although his headquarters stay in Rome.

Valentino, whose full name is Valentino Garavani, has mainly showed his designs in Paris in recent years, although his headquarters stay in Rome.

Valentino, whose full name is Valentino Garavani, has mainly showed his designs in Paris in recent years, although his headquarters stay in Rome.

Valentino, whose full name is Valentino Garavani, has mainly showed his designs in Paris in recent years, although his headquarters stay in Rome.

Million pilgrims pray in Mecca's Great Mosque to prepare for Hajj

MECCA (AFP) — More than a million pilgrims prayed in the Great Mosque here Friday as they prepared for the Hajj, Islam's largest annual pilgrimage, due to begin Saturday.

Some two million Muslims are expected to take part in this year's Hajj to Islam's holiest shrines in the southwestern Saudi cities of Mecca and Medina.

Under the midday sun, tens of thousands of faithful dressed in spotless white robes walked slowly around the Kaaba, the cube-shaped structure in the Grand Mosque's courtyard which houses a black stone Muslims believe was delivered by the Archangel Gabriel to their Prophet Muhammad.

All arteries leading to the Great Mosque, Masjid Al Haram, in the centre of the city were choked with pilgrims unable to find room in the Mosque courtyard, which is large enough to hold a million people.

Leading prayers, the Mosque's imam (prayer leader) called on God to "safeguard and unite Muslims so that they stand strong against miscreants and those who seek to attack Islam and the Islamic Nation."

"May God Almighty aid the warriors of Islam, everywhere in the world, and particularly in Palestine, to reap victory and vanquish the enemies of Islam," he said.

To guard against stampeding crowds, civil defence helicopters regularly overflew holy sites. Four years ago, 270 people were trans-

ported to death in a mass stampede during the Hajj, while in 1990, a panic in the crowds killed 1,426 pilgrims.

Tragedy also struck during last year's Hajj when a fire killed 343 people in a pilgrims' camp on the Mina plain south of Mecca.

Lightly armed police were visible around the Great Mosque and in surrounding areas, along with ambulances.

The security services are expected to closely watch the road from Mecca, the birthplace of Mohammad, to Mina, some 10 kilometres to the north on Sunday, when some two million pilgrims move down it in the first leg of the mass journey of faith.

On Monday at dawn, the pilgrims will begin to climb Mount Arafat, where Mohammad is

believed to have received the first verses of the Koran. The ascent of the mount and the recitation of prayers that day mark the high-point of the Hajj.

The pilgrims are due to return to Mina on Monday evening after a series of rituals in the valley of Muzdalifa, near Mount Arafat.

On Tuesday, the first day of the feast of Eid Al Adha, each pilgrim is supposed to ritually sacrifice a sheep, lamb, or camel, to commemorate the sacrifice of Abraham, whom the Koran says was prepared to take the life of his own son to show his obedience to God.

This year, more than 800,000 sheep, cattle, and camels have been prepared for sacrifice and their meat will be distributed, as every

year, to needy people.

Seven slaughter houses able to handle one million sheep are to be operational for the first day of the feast.

Saudi authorities have set a deadline for foreign pilgrims to leave the country by April 10 once the pilgrimage is over. Those who remain illegally in the country are subject to arrest and deportation.

For many pilgrims, especially those coming from poorer countries, the annual mass influx represents their best chance to enter the oil-rich Saudi kingdom to work.

Each year, Saudi officials expect thousands of pilgrims who try to remain behind illegally, but thousands of others escape the police dragnets.

Each year, Saudi officials expect thousands of pilgrims who try to remain behind illegally, but thousands of others escape the police dragnets.

Each year, Saudi officials expect thousands of pilgrims who try to remain behind illegally, but thousands of others escape the police dragnets.

Each year, Saudi officials expect thousands of pilgrims who try to remain behind illegally, but thousands of others escape the police dragnets.

Each year, Saudi officials expect thousands of pilgrims who try to remain behind illegally, but thousands of others escape the police dragnets.

Each year, Saudi officials expect thousands of pilgrims who try to remain behind illegally, but thousands of others escape the police dragnets.

Each year, Saudi officials expect thousands of pilgrims who try to remain behind illegally, but thousands of others escape the police dragnets.

Each year, Saudi officials expect thousands of pilgrims who try to remain behind illegally, but thousands of others escape the police dragnets.

Each year, Saudi officials expect thousands of pilgrims who try to remain behind illegally, but thousands of others escape the police dragnets.

Each year, Saudi officials expect thousands of pilgrims who try to remain behind illegally, but thousands of others escape the police dragnets.

Each year, Saudi officials expect thousands of pilgrims who try to remain behind illegally, but thousands of others escape the police dragnets.

Each year, Saudi officials expect thousands of pilgrims who try to remain behind illegally, but thousands of others escape the police dragnets.

Each year, Saudi officials expect thousands of pilgrims who try to remain behind illegally, but thousands of others escape the police dragnets.

Each year, Saudi officials expect thousands of pilgrims who try to remain behind illegally, but thousands of others escape the police dragnets.

</